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AN
E S S A Y
ON THE
ORIGINALITY AND PERMANENCY
OF THE
BIBLICAL HEBREW:
WITH
AN APPLICATION TO THE
LEADING PRINCIPLE
OF A
MODERN UNBELIEVER,
WHO DENIES THE EXISTENCE
OF ANY
WRITTEN
WORD OF GOD.

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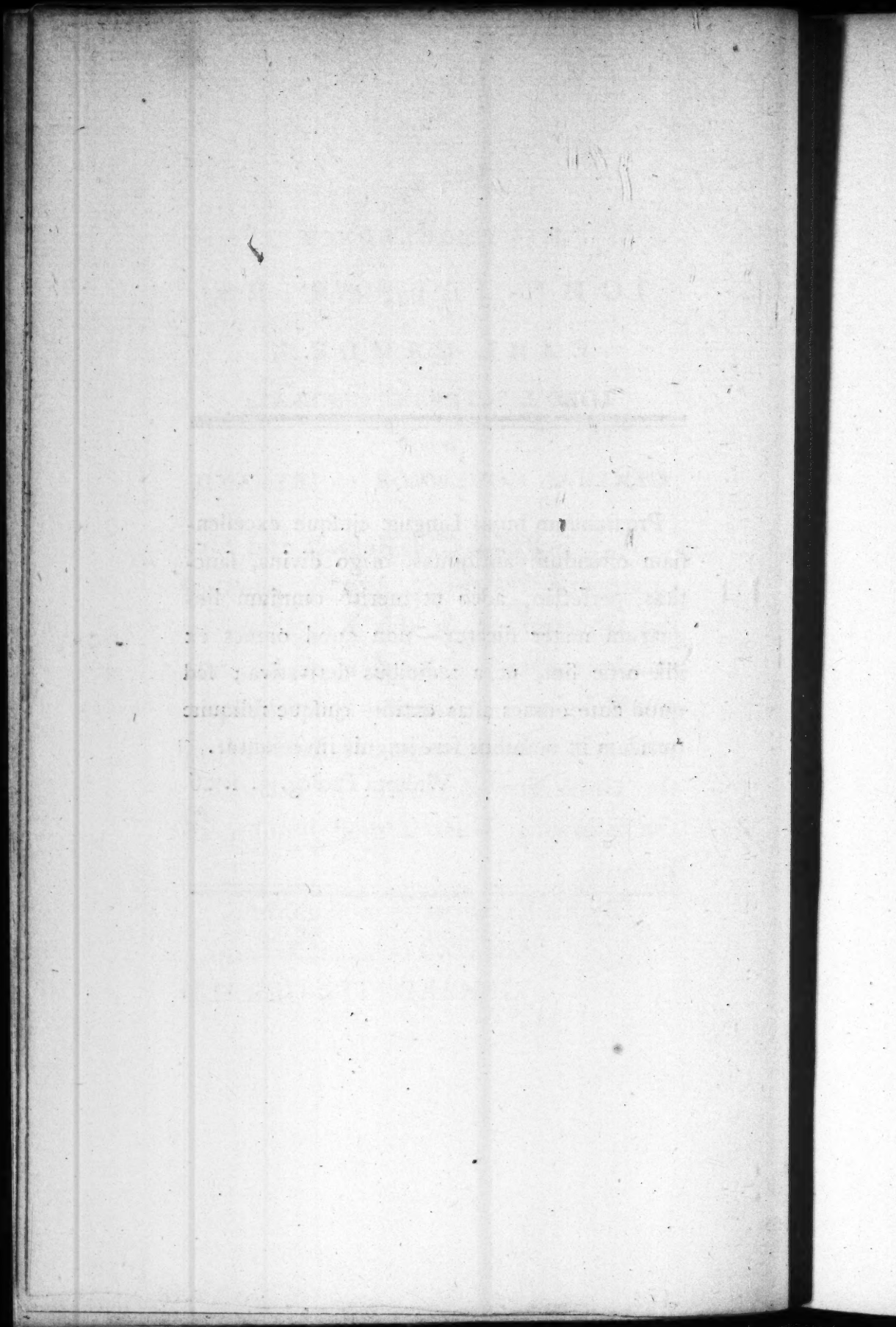
DUBLIN: Printed by GEORGE BONHAM,
For R. E. MERCIER and Co. Bookfellers to Trinity College,
And G. G. and J. ROBINSON, LONDON.

1796.



Præstantiam hujus Linguae ejusque excellen-
tiam ostendunt antiquitas, origo divina, sanc-
titas, perfectio, adeo ut meritò omnium lin-
guarum mater dicatur—non quod omnes ex
illâ ortæ sint, ut a radicibus derivativa; sed
quòd ante omnes alias extitit, ejusque reliquiae
quædam in omnibus fere linguis inveniantur.

Waltoni Proleg. 3. f. 26.



TO
HIS EXCELLENCY
JOHN JEFFERIES,
EARL CAMDEN,
LORD LIEUTENANT GENERAL,
AND
GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND,

As a Testimony of Respect and Gratitude—for his steady Administration of the Government of this Kingdom—his attachment to the Interests of Learning and Religion in general—and the favour with which he has been pleased to regard the University of Dublin in particular; the following Tract is most humbly inscribed,

By his Excellency's most faithful,
And most obedient Servant,
GERALD FITZ-GERALD.

P R E F A C E.

THE many Publications, that, of late years, have appeared in defence of our holy Religion, sufficiently indicate the attacks that have been made on it; but never, since the establishment of Christianity, were the exertions of its Advocates more necessary than at the present time, when Infidelity, which had hitherto acted with reserve, has thrown off its disguise, and not only controverted the Facts and Doctrines of the Gospel, but denied the

the existence of any Revelation to man : Such is the nature of a late Publication, entitled “ The Age of Reason ; ” — a work, though not openly vended, yet secretly read, and industriously circulated — a work, however, which discovers more shrewdness than knowledge—more flippancy than force, but which, from some memorable incidents in the history of its Author, and a peculiar ease and energy of expression, seems well calculated to arrest the attention, and impose on the Judgment of the illiterate.

Language — that Divine gift of the Creator to man ! this author makes the foundation of his whole system of Infidelity, asserting, that it is incapable of being used as *the vehicle of the word of God*.

To shew the weakness of his arguments against this original and natural medium of Divine and Human communication,

nication, is the principal design of the following Essay.

In treating this subject, I have taken, perhaps, a wider range than to the generality of readers may seem necessary; but to the learned, who know the difficulty of tracing the sources of high antiquity, I shall probably, on the other hand, seem to have confined it within too narrow limits: However this be, it is proper to observe, that the execution of the plan, I have prescribed to myself, rendered it necessary to unfold the principles and peculiarities of the Hebrew Language: This I have endeavoured to effect, with as much perspicuity and precision, as the nature of the subject would well permit; and to this end I have divided it into the three following parts, as distinct and necessary objects of investigation.—1st. The Origin and Priority of the Hebrew Language.—2dly. The Permanency of its Characters

or Letters, in opposition to the generally-received opinion of a change by Ezra from the Samaritan to the Square.—3dly. Their original independence with respect to Vowel-Points, as will appear from their structure and signification: On this head I have particularly insisted, with a view of deciding, on a *fixed principle*, the long controverted question concerning the antiquity of the points and accents.

The discussion of these topics is of more consequence than at first view may appear; it goes to the authenticity of the Scriptures themselves, and offers a new argument in its favour: The Jews, it is well known, ascribed a peculiar degree of sanctity to whatever related to their Law, and held their Language, in particular, in the highest veneration, from a well-founded opinion, that both had the same Divine origin, and were protected by the same Divine care; hence,
the

the connexion between them is intimate and essential; and, indeed, the relation that subsists between any ancient language and the matter it records, is of more importance than we are apt to imagine: We feel a kind of instinctive reverence for the productions of antiquity, and for none more than the Hebrew, which clothes the Divine truths contained in it for the information of man, in the easiest and most familiar dress—sometimes displaying metaphorical embellishment, yet sometimes intermixing a shade of obscurity, owing to manners that are obsolete, or to customs that are no more: Limited though it be to a single volume, yet it ranks high in native dignity of expression, disdaining the ornaments of redundant epithet, or laboured harmony, and abounding with synonyms, and other characteristic of richness and variety:

Of these many instances will occur in the following Essay, which the nature of my subject made it necessary to adduce, and from which the student, who has acquired a competent knowledge of the grammar, may derive considerable advantage.

The general arguments I have made use of are, I trust, intelligible to every class of readers; and, in order to give them that weight, which the importance of the matter requires, I have availed myself of the best authorities I could procure, and also of the observations of some learned friends, to whom I acknowledge myself much indebted on this occasion: With these aids I have endeavoured to prove the particulars already mentioned, which may briefly be reduced to the following general proposition, viz. that *the original and once universal language of mankind still exists in the unaltered and uncorrupted characters of our Biblical Hebrew.*

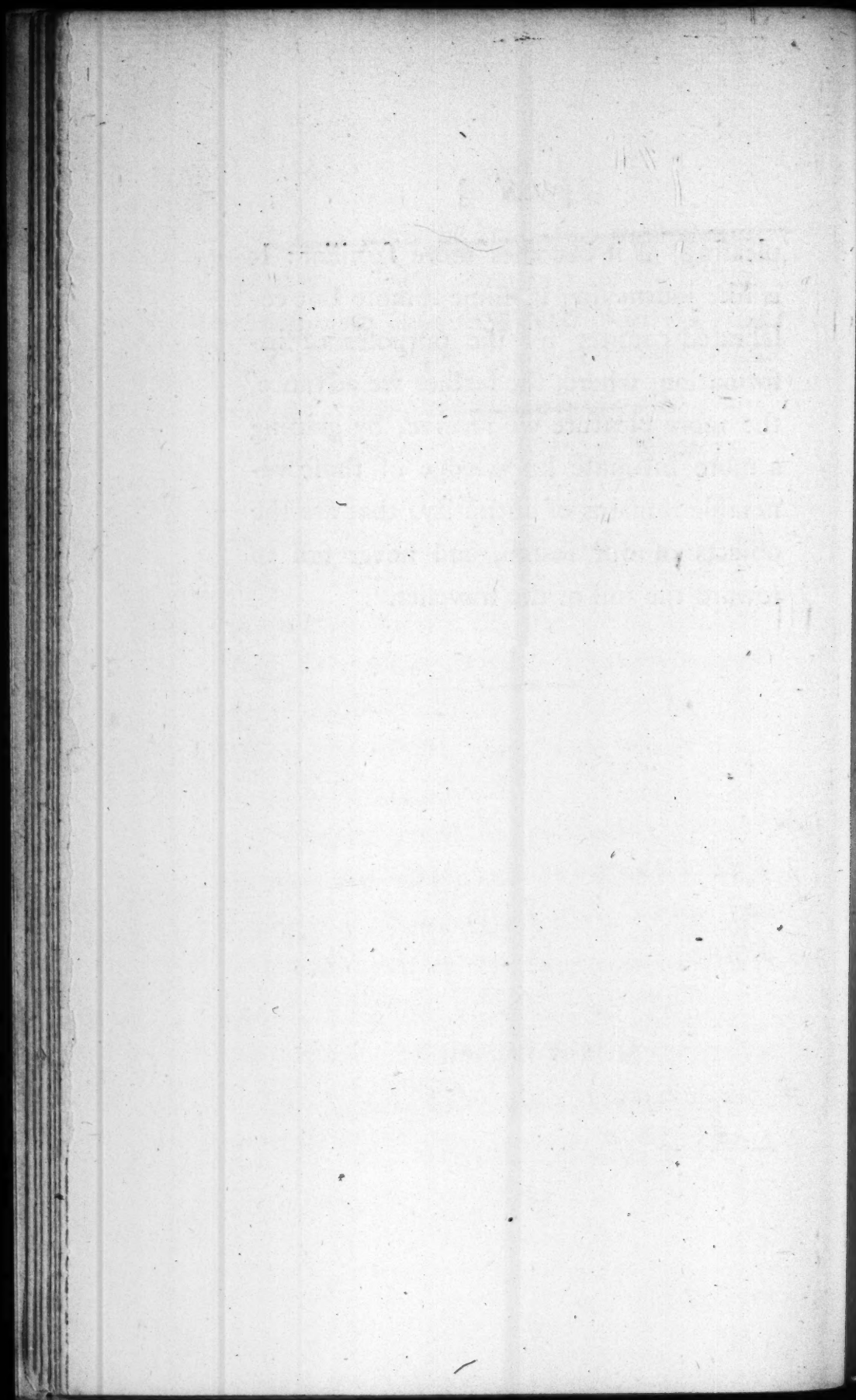
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The truth of this proposition I have principally deduced from the *Mosaic History, and the nature and genius of the Language itself*: Should other principles be thought necessary to establish it, I have nothing to object — I shall not take upon me to assert, that the venerable structure of Hebrew originality is not capable of receiving additional lustre, and higher finishing from abler hands than mine: Yet such as it is, it rises, in native strength and solemnity, far above every other language in the world — withstanding the assaults of time, and protecting the Divine truths committed to its care, against every effort to subvert or destroy them: *The mutability and uncertainty*, to which other languages are subject, apply not to the Hebrew, and even if they should, will not warrant the conclusion that has been drawn from them, against *the existence of a written Word of God*.

I have

I have only to add, that the dates of genealogical and other memorable events, mentioned in this Essay, are, for the most part, taken from Dr. J. Taylor's *Scheme of Scripture Divinity* (and the chronological tables there given,) which Bishop Watson has inserted in the first volume of his *Theological Tracts*, as a "book" that deserves to be generally known." It was written by the author of the *Heb. Eng. Concordance*, which I have particularly consulted in tracing the various significations of the roots, and which may be also recommended, as a work of no less general merit in its way than the former, for facilitating the study of the Hebrew Scriptures—a study to which the high antiquity of the language has annexed an idea of peculiar difficulty, that has discouraged many from engaging in it, but which, when the rudiments are known, experience proves to be more pleasing,

pleasing, as it becomes more familiar: It is like journeying in some remote but celebrated country for the purposes of information, where, the farther we advance, the more pleasure we receive, by gaining a more intimate knowledge of those venerable remains of antiquity, that are the objects of our search, and never fail to reward the toil of the traveller.



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P A R T I.

PART I.

ON THE ORIGIN AND PRIORITY OF THE PRESENT HEBREW LANGUAGE.

CHAP. I.

Importance of the Subject.—Derivation of the Word Hebrew.—Claims of the Chaldaic and other Eastern Languages to a competition.

EVERY one, attached to the cause of Religion, should consider himself interested in the Hebrew Language; it conveys, to us the Scriptures of the Old Testament, from which the New derives much of its
B authority,

authority, the Apostles and Evangelists frequently referring to them, and founding their arguments on the pre-supposed truth, and authenticity of these Writings.

And, as its utility renders it an important, so does its antiquity a most curious subject; it is the language in which the Deity first condescended to address man, as well as the language of his chosen People, who, reckoning from the Call of Abraham, which happened about 1921 Years before Christ,* to the destruction of their city by Vespasian, continued, through various revolutions, a distinct
and

* For, according to the received Chronology of Archbishop Usher, from the Creation to the Flood are 1656 years; from the Flood to the Confusion and Dispersion 240, and from the Dispersion to the Call of Abraham (who was at this time 75 years old,) are 187: The sum of these being subtracted from 4004, which is the number of years elapsed from the Creation to Christ, gives us the interval between the Call and the birth of Christ—viz. 1921.

and separate nation for a space of about 2000 years*.

In order to trace its antiquity, I shall in the first place consider the origin of the name; this has been differently accounted for—some deriving it from עֶבֶר *Eber*, a passage, alluding to *that* of Abraham over the river Euphrates, when, in obedience to God's command, he came from “ Ur of the Chaldees” into the land of Canaan;

B 2

and

* From the Call or Promise to Abraham, to the time when Jacob and his Family went down into Egypt	- -	215
The Israelites were in Egypt (of which in a state of bondage 140 years)	- - - - -	215
In the Wilderness under Moses and Aaron	- -	40
Under the government of Judges, from Joshua to Saul,		357
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years after its foundation	- - - - -	507
From the destruction of the Temple to its restoration and dedication, in Ezra's time, by order of Cyrus,		73
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and others from *Eber* or *Heber* *, the father of Peleg, in whose days the Earth was divided, after the confusion of Tongues.

The former derivation seems to be more natural, and is founded on the Septuagint Version of that part of Genesis (14 ch.—13 v.) which gives to Abraham the Epithet *τω περᾶν* *Transfluviali*, from the striking circumstance of his *passing over* the river; yet, the latter has strong examples to support it; for why might not Abraham and his Family be called *Hebrews*, and their language *Hebrew*, from *Eber* or *Heber*—the last person, in whose days it was universally spoken, in the same manner as his posterity were afterwards called *Israelites*, from *Israel*, the surname of Jacob, that they might not be confounded with the descendants of Esau; and as,
after

* Bochart's *Phaleg*, L. 2. Cap. 14. Fol. 104.

after the ten Tribes were carried into Captivity, the two remaining were called *Jews*, from *Judah*, the principal of them, which continued in possession of the regal authority, and out of which the Messiah was to be born?

The names of the other Eastern Languages are derived from the Countries where they are spoken—as the Chaldaic or Syriac—the Arabic—Ethiopic—Phœnician, &c. all of which have had their respective advocates for antiquity: Whether any of these be the original, from which the rest have descended, or whether the great original be extinct, is a subject that has long divided the sentiments of the learned: That Language first came by inspiration is evident from the Mosaic History of the formation of man, which acquaints us, that “ what-
“ soever Adam called every living crea-
“ ture,

“ture, that the name thereof.” Gen. 2.—19*. The language thus communicated to our first Parent the Jews assert to be the Hebrew, in which Moses wrote, and therefore they attribute to it a peculiar sanctity: Several of the Christian Fathers, and many of the moderns—as Buxtorf, Bochart, Heidegger, Selden, &c. contend for the originality of the Hebrew; while the Maronites, or Eastern Christians, give precedence to the Syriac or Chaldee: These are supposed to have been *originally* the same (2 K. 18—26.—Ezra 4—7.)—in the opinion of Vitringa they

* The truth of this account is confirmed by experience.
 “Language, says Dr. Johnson, must have come by inspiration; a thousand—nay, a million of Children, could
 “not invent a language; while the organs are pliable, there
 “is not understanding enough to form a language; by the
 “time that there is understanding enough, the organs are
 “become stiff: we know that, after a certain age, we cannot learn to pronounce a new language.” Boswell’s Life
 “of Dr. Johnson, 3 Vol. p. 354.

they are but a Dialect of the Hebrew *; and indeed, it is natural to think, that when God confounded the speech of the builders of Babel, he made (as Bochart has remarked) the Dialects of those Descendants of Noah, who went with their families into the neighbouring nations, so far to agree, that they might with less difficulty, and in a shorter space of time, mutually understand, and thus more easily maintain an intercourse with each other: Accordingly we learn from the History of Moses,

* “ Sane Chaldeam aut Syriacam linguam etiam nunc experimur omnium minime ab Hebræâ linguâ differre, ita ut Dialectus potius et variata elocutio, quam lingua ab Hebræâ diversa habenda sit.—Vitrin. observ. fac. L. 1. C. 5. Sec. 5.

With respect to the Chaldæes; the derivation of *Ur*, a City of Chaldea, tends to confirm this opinion; for it is evidently the same with the Hebrew אור *Ur*, which signifies Light or Fire, whence this City is so called, from the Sun which was worshipped here under the Symbol of Fire.—See Gale's Court of the Gentiles, 1 V. Ch. 11. P. 81.

Moses, that, in the time of Abraham, the Eastern nations made use of a kindred Dialect intelligible to each other, as appears from what passed between Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, and Nahor's family in Mesopotamia, when sent thither to get a wife for Isaac; and also from what passed, many years after, between Jacob and the Inhabitants of the same Country, when he treated with Laban for his Daughter Rachel: And, though in a subsequent Covenant, they called the heap of Stones which was a witness between them, by different names, (Gen. 31—47,) this does not prove a difference in their language; for we do not find that an Interpreter was necessary on this occasion, as in the succeeding generation between the Brethren of Joseph and the Egyptians, but such a corruption, or deviation of one or other from the original,

as occurs daily in the Dialects of other Tongues*.

But, whatever difference might have arisen between the Mesopotamian or Chaldee Dialect, spoken by Laban, and the Hebrew spoken at the same time by Jacob, there seems to be no doubt, but that the old Canaanitish and the Hebrew were the same, or nearly so, when Abraham first came out of Chaldea: This is sufficiently clear, from his having conversed with the Inhabitants, without an
C Interpreter,

* Thus, Laban called it *גֵּגֶר שְׁחָדוֹת* *Jegar Sabadutha*, which, in the Syro-Chaldean, signifies an heap of ocular evidence; from *אָגַר* *Agar*, to heap, and *שְׁחָדוֹת* (with the Chaldaic termination *א*,) testimony: But Jacob called it *גִּלְעָד* *Galbeed*, which, in Hebrew, signifies a pile or cumulation of testimony, from *עֵד* a witness, and *גִּל* a round heap or pile, both signifying the same thing—in the same manner as (to borrow an illustration from our own language,) that kind of fuel which we in Ireland call *Turf*, is in England called *Peat*; and those state Attendants, that in the former are called *Battle-Axes*, are in the latter called *Teomen of the Guards*: Yet, from such different phraseology in a few instances, we do not infer a difference in Language.

Interpreter, and is further confirmed by the Canaanitish names of the same period —viz. מלכי-צדק *Melchizedech* — אבי-מלך *Abimelech* — פי-כל *Phicol*, &c, which are all pure Hebrew.

Notwithstanding this general affinity of Languages, in the days of Abraham and his family, or rather *Dialects* of the original language, which, there is no good reason to suppose, was destroyed at the confusion, it could not be expected that the likeness would continue long; distance of time and place, commerce, and its consequent changes in customs and manners, and a variety of other circumstances, must have all contributed to produce that diversity of Tongues, by which nations are now distinguished from each other: But, amidst all the alterations that have marked the progress and variety of Language, the Hebrew has been always remarkable for its *simplicity* and *stability*,
and,

and, consequently, bids fairest for the honour of originality: The local circumstance of Abraham's birth is, by no means, sufficient to support the priority of the Chaldee, which some have contended for; for though Abraham was born and bred in Chaldea, he might not have used the corrupted language *there* spoken after the Confusion, inasmuch as the original, or primæval Tongue, might have been retained perfect in his particular Tribe or family, which had no concern in the building of Babel *—a circumstance the more probable, if we consider the honour appropriated to that very family, of preserving pure and entire the knowledge and worship of the true God.

Hence, the argument in support of the Chaldee, from Abraham's being a Chaldean, can have no weight, unless it be

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proved,

* Ockleii Introduc. ad Linguas Orientales, P. 9, 10.

proved, that he and his family had not been favoured in any peculiar manner, so as to be permitted to retain the original language; or had forfeited this privilege, by a participation in the guilt of those who had been concerned in the building of Babel: But, so far was this from being the case, that he was called out of that very country into Canaan, to be the head of God's chosen people; and it does not appear, that either he, or any of his Posterity, had ever used in Canaan, or elsewhere, the Chaldee language, or any other than the Hebrew.

The same argument is also objectionable, from a consideration of the antediluvian names, which are derived from the Hebrew, and not from the Chaldee; and from the *Paranomasiaë*, or allusions which are found in the former, and not in the latter: Thus, for instance, the natural and leading one, which Adam used when
he

he called his wife, *Woman*, agrees only with the Hebrew “ she shall be called “ *Isba*, woman, because she was taken “ *meish* out of man,” (Gen. ii.—23.) but does not appear in the Chaldee Paraphrases, in which, though גבר *gebar*, is used of a man, yet never *Gabretha* (but איתתא *ittba* or *ittbeta*) of a woman*.

With respect to the *Syriac*, its antiquity has been left as undetermined by the Ancients, as the boundaries of the Country itself, which have not been accurately ascertained; And, as the latter has been divided into different Provinces, so has its language into different Dialects: Of these the three following have been particularly distinguished: 1st. The Aramean (so called from Aramus the last of the sons of Shem) used in Mesopotamia, and the outer Syria. 2d. The Dialect of Palestine

* Bochart's Phaleg. l. i. cap. 15. p. 58.

Palestine and the inner Syria. 3d. The Chaldee, or Nabathean Dialect, spoken in the mountainous parts of Assyria, and the most unpolished of the three *.

Some have pretended that the Syriac was the first of all the Oriental Tongues, and that as Christ, the *second Adam*, spoke in it, it was, probably, the language of the first Adam and of his Posterity, until the confusion of Tongues.

This argument is rather specious than solid; for, it is well known, that the Syriac spoken by our Saviour and his Apostles, could not have been the ancient Syriac or Chaldee; it was rather a mixture of the Chaldee and Hebrew, which originated in the times of the Babylonish Captivity, or of those Syrian Kings—the successors of Alexander, who invaded and distressed Judea: That it was such a mixture

* Asiles' Origin and Progress of Writing, 3 ch. p. 37, &c.

ture seems plain from certain passages in the Gospel—as, for instance, from these emphatic words of our Saviour, recorded by St. Matthew, *אלי אלי לי מנא שבקתני* *eli eli lama Sababthani*: Of these words the three first are Hebrew, and the last Syriac, corresponding with the Hebrew *עזבתני* *azabthani* or *gnazabthani* in the 22d Psalm: Many other words also occur in the New Testament, that shew an affinity between the Syriac and Hebrew—as *Abba—Acel-dama—Bar-jona—Ephatha*, &c.

Others have supposed the *Arabic* coeval with the Hebrew, assigning the same origin to both*; the latter being derived from Heber, the father of Peleg, and the former, as they say, from Joctan the brother of Peleg, and afterwards propagated
in

* See Robertson's *Dissertation de Origine & antiquitate Linguae Arabicæ*, prefixed to his *Clavis Pentateuchi*, in which he shews the connexion and harmony that subsist between both Languages.

in Arabia Deserta, by Ishmael, the son of Abraham: Hence they account for the same Roots in, general, allowing for a slight variation of Dialect, which time and distance might naturally produce.

That the Arabic is a Dialect of the Hebrew, or derived from the same source, is generally acknowledged; and, indeed, it appears from several circumstances, of which the following deserve particular notice: Job was an Arabian, yet, we find that the names of his Daughters are of Hebrew extraction: The name of the first was ימימה *Yemima*, from יום the Day, i.e. of the felicity which he enjoyed after the long night of his affliction: The name of the second was קציעה *Ketzia*, i. e. Cassia—a sweet spice, from קצע *Katza*, to scrape off: And the name of the third was קרן הפוך *Keren Haphuc*, i. e. the horn restored; God having now restored him to his prosperity, from קרן and הפך. Job xlii.—14.

We

We find also, in the 37th Ch. of Genesis, the brethren of Joseph conversing, without an Interpreter, with the Ishmaelite or Arabian Merchants, which shews, that both nations anciently used the same language: This further appears from the History of Moses, who, when he fled from Egypt, went to Midian to the house of Jethro the Arabian, who was so delighted with his company and conversation, that he gave him his Daughter Zipporah in marriage; and, it is here he is supposed to have written (if he did write it,) the history of Job, as a consolation to his Countrymen, then under bondage in Egypt.

As to the *Ethiopic* Language, it has been remarked, that such is its affinity to the Arabic, that he who studies the latter, acquires, at the same time, an almost equal knowledge of the former*: Whence

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it

* Debet, qui linguæ Ethiopicæ operam clare instituit,
Arabicæ

it has been supposed, that the Ethiopians were a colony of the Arabians, rather than of the Egyptians*: Certain it is, both Ethiopia and Egypt, if we consider their distance from Chaldea, or that part of Asia where the Confusion and Dispersion took place, must have been peopled later than the Countries adjacent to Chaldea, and, consequently, can have less pretensions to priority of language: It was Misraim, we are told, the son of Ham, who first led Colonies into Egypt, whence it is in Scripture called “ the land of Ham.”

The *Phœnician* Language next claims our attention, on account of the antiquity of the Samaritan Pentateuch, supposed to have been written in the Canaanitish—
that

Arabicæ peritum esse; tanta enim est inter has cognatio, ut quot Arabicas voces didiceris, tot fere Æthiopicas discas. —Ockleii Introd, ad linguas Orientales, p. 160.

* Wotton's Discourse concerning the Confusion of Languages at Babel, p. 41.

that is, the old Phœnician or Hebrew Characters, whence its priority to the present Biblical Hebrew has been inferred : But, with what little probability, will appear from the following particulars relative to the origin of this celebrated Pentateuch : In the first place, we learn from the second Book of Kings (xvii. 24,) that the Samaritans were the Descendants of that mixed multitude, whom Salmanaser, king of Assyria, had sent from *Cuth* and other Provinces of his empire, to inhabit those parts out of which he had carried the ten tribes of Israel into Captivity* : We

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also

* This Captivity by Salmanaser, who destroyed the Government, and Kingdom of *Israel*, after it had continued 254 years, happened in the reign of Hosea, 721 years before Christ. 2 Kings xvii. 4.

After this are reckoned three Captivities of *Judah*, which it may not be unnecessary to distinguish here, in order to understand more clearly what follows : The 1st, when *Daniel* was carried captive to Babylon, about 606 years before Christ : The 2d, about four years after, when *Mordecai* and *Ezekiel* were made Captives, (Esth. ii. 5, 6. Ezek. i. 1, 2 :)

The

also learn that these colonies were annoyed by wild beasts, to such a degree, that they attributed this calamity to their ignorance of the worship of the God of their Country, which induced them to petition Esarhaddon, the then Assyrian King, that one of the captive Priests might be sent to instruct them, and that their Petition was granted: This happened about 40 years after the Captivity.

But the effects of this mission were not such as might have been expected from an Instructor in the Law of Moses; the Samaritans soon relapsed into their former Idolatry, and worshipped the false Gods of the nations from whence they came, as well as the God of Israel: The Priest already mentioned, therefore, probably

The 3d, and final one, when Zedekiah, with the remains of Judah and Israel, was taken by *Nebuchadnezzar*, king of the Chaldeans, and their Temple destroyed, about 588 years before Christ, 2 Kings xxv. 2—9.

bably taught them from Tradition*, and not from a Copy of the Law, which forbade all Idolatrous Worship; or, if he introduced a Copy of the Law, it is not likely it would have been preserved among such a people, through a space of about 260 years, for so long, at least, did they continue Idolaters before the son of Joiada the High Priest came among them†: This person, who is called Manasseh by Josephus, was banished from Jerusalem by Nehemiah, with others who had married strange wives, and having fled to Samaria, he there, by the interest of his Father-in-law Sanballat, the Governor, built a Temple on Mount *Gerizim*, and was constituted High Priest thereof: Upon this occasion he is supposed to have procured

* Prid. Conn. part 1. b. 6. p. 416. 8vo. ed.

† This happened, according to Dr. Kennicott, about 400 years before Christ; but, according to the received Chronology, about 428. In about six years after his arrival, the Temple at Gerizim was built.

cured a Version of the Pentateuch into the Samaritan Character, (for it is no more than the Hebrew in another Character,) from a Copy of the Law in Ezra's collection, which he brought with him from Jerusalem.

That Manasseh first brought the Law of Moses among them, and thereby gave rise to the Samaritan Pentateuch, seems evident from several considerations; for, after this period, the Samaritans entirely conformed to the worship of the true God, without the least mixture of their former Idolatry: Their Pentateuch, to which this remarkable change is to be principally attributed, contained the Interpolations* of Ezra's Copy, which shews
it

* That is, such passages, as were deemed necessary for connecting and illustrating the Text, in what related to matters that happened after the death of Moses—as, for instance, the last ch. of Deuteronomy, and some places in Genesis also, of which Dr. Prideaux gives a particular account in his *Connections*—Part I. b. v. p. 343.

it to have been only a Transcript from that Copy—especially, as there are many Variations in it, which could only have arisen in the transcribing, from a mistake of some letters similar in the Hebrew, but which have no similitude in the Samaritan: Besides, the original of both—the very *Autograph* of Moses, was in the possession—not of the Samaritans, nor of the Israelites before them, but the Jews; having been found by Hilkiab the High Priest in the Temple of Jerusalem, about 35 years before the Babylonish Captivity: These, and other particulars, which I shall hereafter have occasion to elucidate under the head of Letters, will, I presume, be sufficient to prove, that no argument in favour of the prior antiquity of the Phœnician, or Samaritan Language, can be deduced from its Pentateuch; on the contrary, that the advantage, in this respect, lies evidently in favour of the Jewish.

Dismissing

Dismissing, therefore, for the present, all further discussion of general topics, relative to the languages of those Eastern nations, which, from their vicinity to the scene of confusion and to each other, are allowed to have the best pretensions to antiquity, I shall now endeavour to prove, in a more direct and particular manner, the originality of our Biblical Hebrew, or, at least, its priority to any other of the known languages of antiquity.

The principles, on which I shall proceed, are the five following :

- 1st. The longevity of the Patriarchs, and first Personages of Antiquity.
- 2d. Their proper names, which are in the Hebrew Language, and evidently derived from words in this language.
- 3d. The common names or words of the language, which are also Primitives in Hebrew, and Derivatives in other Tongues.

4th.

4th. The precision and varied signification of the Roots.

5th. The peculiarity of the Alphabet.

Arguments founded on these principles, that is, on the *authority* of the Scriptures, and the *nature* and *genius* of the language itself, will, I trust, have due weight, in deciding a long controverted Question—a Question, not only of singular curiosity, but of considerable importance to our Religion; for important, surely, must that Question be, that leads to the investigation of a Language, which was dictated by Divinity—which descended from the Creation to the Confusion—which survived that miraculous and ever-memorable *Period*—which contained the Law engraved by God himself, or, under his direction, on two Tables of Stone, and which was preserved and perpetuated by his chosen People, through all their Cap-

E tivities

tivities and revolutions, from Moses to the present time.

The probability of these particulars, as applied to the Hebrew, in which our ancient Scriptures are written, I hope clearly to deduce from the foregoing principles: Strict demonstration I do not pretend to, nor can it be expected in a subject, that, like all other researches into high antiquity, is, in many respects, attended with almost insuperable difficulty: But, where truth is concerned, difficulties should not deter, especially, in a discussion that tends to explode those fabulous accounts of other nations, on which the Free-thinkers of our age have so often insisted, and to refute the objections that have been made to the newness of the World, as related by Moses: This Divine Historian informs us of the time, when Mankind had but one language, and how new ones were introduced; and the History of Empires,
and

and of the rise and progress of Arts and Sciences, so conformable to our own experience of their novelty, sufficiently confirms the truth of his account: On *this*, then, as the oldest and most authentic of all antiquity, I shall lay the foundation of my two first arguments.

C H A P. II.

Priority of the Hebrew—proved from the Longevity of the Patriarchs and first Personages of Antiquity—from the proper Names in this Language—from the common Names or Words, which are Primitives in Hebrew, and Derivatives in other Tongues.

FROM the longevity of the Patriarchs it may, in the first place, be inferred, that the Language, in which Moses wrote the Pentateuch, was that, which all men used both *before* and *after* the Flood, or, that universal one alluded to in Genesis, (xi. 1.) where it is said that “the whole Earth “was of one language, and of one “Speech,” or Dialect*; for Noah survived

* Literally, *one Lip and Language*: By one *lip* here, J. Clerk understands *agreement in opinion*, with respect to the building

vived the Flood 350 years, of which the last 110 were subsequent to the Dispersion; and Shem, the Son of Noah, was many years coteremporary with his Descendant Abraham, who was born two years after the death of Noah*, and in whose family the same common language, whatever it was, must have continued,
'till

building a great city; and, according to this Interpretation, he attributes the discontinuance of the work at Babel—not, as some think, to the creation of new Languages—nor, as others, to a confusion in the pronunciation of the old, but to a *disagreement* among the builders, which caused their separation and dispersion into different Districts; whence, in the progress of time, arose that diversity of Dialects and Languages that have since taken place in the world: Whether this explication of the phrase—שפה אחת *Sapha echath*, one lip, be agreeable to the context here, or in the seventh verse of the same Chapter, let the reader determine. J. Clerici Comment. in Gen. c. xi.

* They, who follow the Jewish Chronology, place the birth of Abraham 157 years earlier, representing him as 45 years old at the time of the Dispersion, which, if true, would add considerable strength to the argument founded on the longevity of the Patriarchs.—*Seder Olam Rabba*, seu Chronologiæ Hebræorum majoris, Cap. 1. Interprete G. Genebrando, p. 1.

'till the *going down* of the children of Israel into Egypt, and, of course, to the time of Moses, who, having received the Law from Mount Sinai, in the third month after their departure, (Exodus xix. 1.) wrote it in the Hebrew Characters—the same, as I shall hereafter prove, with what we have at this day in our Bible: The Hebrew, therefore, must have been the language of the Post-diluvian Patriarchs—a language, which, we have every reason to suppose, they were as careful to keep pure, and distinct from that of the Egyptians, as they did their religious rites and ceremonies.

And, as the Hebrew was the Patriarchal, so will it appear to have been, also, the primitive language of mankind; for, if we extend the same mode of argument to the Ante-diluvian Patriarchs, whose longevity is recorded in the book of Genesis, we may thence collect, that Methuselah,
 who

who lived to the very year of the Flood, had been 243 years cotemporary with Adam—that Shem, the son of Noah, had been about 97 cotemporary with Methuselah—and that Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, had been 50 years cotemporary with Shem, and was 130 when he went down into Egypt; so that no more than three persons, *Methuselah*, *Shem* and *Jacob* were necessary to hand down the names and knowledge of things from Adam to the time when the Children of Israel went down into Egypt; that is, through a space of more than 2230 years*; and there being no reason to suppose any change in the original language, previous to the Confusion and Dispersion, it follows, that
it

* Adam, who lived 930 years, was 687 when Methuselah was born; and Methuselah was 872 when Shem was born; and Shem was 550 when Jacob was born; and Jacob was 130 when he went into Egypt; and these added together make 2239 years.

it must have continued afterwards unaltered, at least to the Days of Moses.

Hence we are warranted to conclude, that, since God chose to *write* his Law in the Hebrew language, when he delivered it to Moses, this must have been the original language; in which he had also addressed Adam*, and out of which, after the Dispersion, all other ancient languages were formed.

Two objections occur here, of which it may be proper to take notice; 1st, the probability that the original language was destroyed at the Confusion; otherwise, the builders of Babel might have conversed in *it*—though not in any new one, as the Disciples at Pentacost, when endued with the faculty of speaking other languages

* Quum Deus, sibi semper similis, & uniformiter agens dederit miraculose & supernaturaliter in lapideis Tabulis exaratam legem suam Mosi; necesse est omnino, ut sit illa ipsa lingua & Character cœlestis, quem primò dederit Adamo. Postell. de Originibus. Cap. v. p. 20.

languages, yet conversed together in their former common Tongue.

To this objection it may be replied, that the same divine Power, that enabled the Disciples to understand different languages at the Pentacost, might have produced a contrary effect among the builders of Babel, so as to prevent them from understanding each other—not only in the newly created languages, (if such had been created,) but in their former common Tongue, the words of which might have been differently understood, or so much perverted, as to produce different Dialects * ultimately terminating in different languages—especially, among nations far
F removed

* Post confusionem Babylonicam varix ortæ sunt Dialecti, ex ipsâ nimirum pronunciationis diversitate—minime intelligendum esse censeo, quasi Deus nova vocabula unicuique illorum ad sensus exprimendos inspiraverit, (id enim esset valde absurdum, et cujus contrarium abunde probari videtur ex linguarum, quæ ex istâ confusione ortæ sunt, cognatione,) sed aliquo modo crispationem linguæ mutaverit.—Ockleii Introduc. ad Linguas Orientales, p. 7.

removed in time and situation: And, either of these cases might have happened, consistently with the *preservation of the original* in one favoured family; whereas, the contrary hypothesis cannot be maintained, without supposing that the names handed down to us by Moses, of persons and places in the Ante-diluvian world, were fictitious—a circumstance that would impeach the candour and fidelity of the sacred Historian, who has given us these names (as I shall shew in my next argument) in the Hebrew language, and even derived himself many of them from it.

2dly, It is objected, that the original language, if retained after the Confusion, could not be the Hebrew—this being peculiar to the Canaanites, who were the Descendants of the accursed *Ham*, and, therefore, not entitled to such a distinguished mark of favour, as the possession of the primitive Tongue.

To

To this it may be likewise replied, that there is not sufficient ground to suppose the Descendants of Ham so far involved in the curse, as to incur the severe punishment of an entire separation from their nearest kindred*; for such a separation must have been the consequence, had they been deprived of all knowledge of the primæval Language, supposed to have been used by their brethren of the stock of Shem and Japhet: But, by reason of the affinity of Dialects, Abraham, who spoke this Language, would have been understood by the Canaanites, when he came among them; accordingly, we find by his conversation with them, as related in the 14th and 23d Chapters of Genesis, that they did understand him; and, as he was called the *Hebrew* in the former of these Chapters, probably to distinguish

F 2

him

* Wotton's Discourse concerning the Confusion of Languages at Babel, &c. p. 61, &c.

him from the three confederate Canaanites there mentioned, it must have been *his* Language, and not that of the Canaanites, that was then called the *Hebrew*, though their own might have been afterwards so called—not, as being the language first spoken by them, but because the people of Israel spoke it, who had so long inhabited their land *.

These observations are considerably strengthened by the Patriarchal, and other *proper names*—especially those of our primeval ancestors, which, it has been often remarked, are in the Hebrew language, and evidently derived from words in this language, as we have it at the present day in our Bible.

Thus, אָדָם *Adam*, is derived from אֲדָמָה *adama*, earth, out of which he was formed: חַוָּה *chava*, *Eve*, from חַיָּ *chai*, life, or to live,

* Aberbinel on Isaiah xix. 18. quoted by Buxtorf—de Linguae Heb. *In et a confusione—conserv. et propag. Sec. 8.*

live, "because the mother of all living," Gen. iii. 20.—קַיִן *Cain*, an acquisition, from קָנָה *kana*, to get, "because gotten from "the Lord," Gen. iv. 1.—שֵׁת * , from שוּת *Suth*, put, because put or "appointed "another seed instead of Abel," Gen. iv. 25. חֲנוֹךְ *Enoch*, from חָנַךְ *chanac*, to dedicate, because he was born when the city, which his father Cain built, was dedicated. Gen. iv. 17.

Thus also, מֶתְבֶּשֶׁלַח *Metbuselab*, is derived from מוּת *muth*, to die; and שְׁלַח *Sbalach*, to emit or let loose, i. e. the waters †, for he died but a few months before the Flood: And נֹחַ *Noah*, from נֹחַ *nuach*, which signifies rest or comfort—a name given him by his father Lamech, because he was to be a relief to him in his laborious

* It is *Sheth* in the original; but I chose to give *this*, and some other proper names here mentioned, as they are expressed in our English Bible, to prevent any misapprehension.

† Leigh's *Critica Sacra*.

borious employments, Gen. v. 29. or, in reference to the Deluge, intimating prophetically, that he was to be the comforter and restorer of a desolated world.

The names of the Post-diluvian Patriarchs and Princes are, likewise, evidently derived from the same source: Thus Abram, which signifies a high Father; and Abraham, as if it were Abrahamon, a high Father of a multitude, from אב *ab*, a Father—רם *ram*, high, and the ה of המון *hamon*, a multitude: So, also, יצחק *Izschak*, Isaac, from צחק *tzachak*, to laugh: יעקב *Jacob*, from אקב *akab* or גנאקב *gnakab*, to supplant: יוסף *Joseph*, from יספ *Jasaph*, to add: בנימין *Benjamin*, from בן *ben* and ימין *Yamin*, son of the right hand, i. e. favoured: משה *Moshe* or *Moses*, from משה *mascha*, to draw out from the water: דוד *David*, from דוד *dod*, beloved: שלמה *Shelomo* or *Solomon*, from שלום *shalom*, peace, (1 Chron. xxii. 9.) Hence שלם *Salem*,

Salem, a city of Canaan, where *Melchizedek* reigned, afterwards called *Jerusalem* (Pf. lxxvi. 3.): And יהודה *Jebuda* or *Judab*, from יה *jab*, God, and הודה *bodab*, to confess or glorify ; of which the reason is given in Gen. xxix. 35. where Leah at his birth says, “ now will I praise the “ Lord.” From the name of this Patriarch, יהודי *Jebudi*, a *Jew*, comes, which originated after the defection of the ten Tribes, denoting one who belonged to the Kingdom of Judah ; but, after the Babylonish Captivity, the name יהודים *Jebudim*, or *Jews*, was extended to all those who retained the Jewish Religion, to whatever Tribe or Country they belonged.

The authors, indeed, of the Universal History (v. i. b. i. ch. ii. sec. 5.) have objected to this argument, drawn from the Etymologies of the Hebrew names, remarking, “ that we cannot be sure that
“ those

“ those used by Moses were the original
 “ names, and not translated by him from
 “ the primitive tongue into Hebrew, or,
 “ at least, somewhat altered, to accom-
 “ modate what he wrote to the under-
 “ standings of the Jews ;” and, as a proof
 of his approbation of such changes, they
 say, “ he altered his own name, which
 “ was originally *Moiſe*, composed of two
 “ Coptic or old Egyptian words—*Moi*,
 “ water, and *ſe* to preserve.”

Not to mention the error of confound-
 ing the *Coptic* with the *old* Egyptian, I
 reply, that if there had been a primitive
 Tongue, from which Moses translated
 such Hebrew names, it must appear ex-
 traordinary that he has not, in any part
 of his writings, given us the least intima-
 tion of such a Tongue ; nor does it seem
 to be either necessary or *usual* to change
 the proper names of any language for the
 better

better understanding them in another* :
 With respect to his own name indeed, I
 allow, that *that* being given him by an
 Egyptian, it may possibly be of Egyptian
 original, and derived, as is said, from
moii or *moiise*, which corresponding nearly
 with the Hebrew derivation מִשֶּׁה *mashe*,
 both in sound and signification, as to
 the occasion of it, he might naturally
 have preferred the latter, in compliment
 to the Jews, the better to impress on their
 minds the circumstance of his miraculous
 preservation ; accordingly, he introduces
 Pharaoh's Daughter assigning this reason
 for imposing it—because, said she, מִשִּׁיתִּיבוּ
meshitibu, I drew him out of the waters,
 Ex. ii. 10. But, the alteration made by
 G him

* Observatum præterea est a præstantissimis viris Histo-
 riographis veteribus, minime fuit in more positum, in His-
 toriâ nomina mutare *propria* : Vitringa, l. i. c. 4. f. 10, 11.
 —The few exceptions, that have been made to the truth of
 this general observation, are clearly accounted for by Wal-
 ton, in his Proleg. to the London Polyglot. 3—sec. 5.

him on this occasion, if he did make one, is so slight, and the reason so obvious, that it by no means follows, that he took the same liberty in any other instance; for, what end or purpose he could have in view by giving us fictitious for real names in an original History—especially that part of it, which relates to transactions before his time, is more than I am able to comprehend; whereas, the changes that have been made in the names of a few places after his death—as in *Laiſb* and *Mount Moriah*, for instance, are easily accounted for, from the circumstances that occasioned them*: The objection, therefore, to the etymology of the Hebrew names,

* Thus, Abraham is said to have pursued the Kings who carried Lot away captive, as far as *Dan* (Gen. xiv. 14,) whereas, the name of the place was *Laiſb*, until the Danites, long after the death of Moses, possessed themselves of it, and called it *Dan*, after their Father: Thus also, *Mount Moriah*, alluded to in Gen. xxii. 14. is there called the Mount of the Lord; but it was not so called 'till the Temple was built on it some hundred years after.

names, founded on the name of Moses, is inadmissible—even on the supposition that he had actually changed it.

This supposition, it is but fair to acknowledge, has the authority of Josephus in its favour, who, in the second book of his *Antiquities*, says, that the name *Moses* or *Moyfes* is compounded of an Egyptian Word—*mu* *Water*, and *sons*, *preserved*: This notion of its being a compound name is considered by the learned Bochart, in his *Phaleg* (l. i. c. 15,) as a mere fiction, “huic figmento non facile assentietur quisquis,” &c.—It being, in his opinion, evidently derived from the Hebrew Verb מָשָׁה *mashe*, which signifies to draw out of the Waters, as in Ex. ii. 10. and is never used in any other sense, “nusquam,” says he, “usurpatur nisi de educatione ex aquis;” and, as a proof of this, he refers to 2 Sam. xxii. 17.—Psalm xviii. 17. and Is. lxiii. 11. and indeed, if

no example can be found in the Bible to invalidate this remark, it appears to me to decide, almost to a certainty, against the change imputed to Moses in the present instance.

The authors of the Universal History have also further objected, that the Hebrew names themselves are more pertinently derived from some other of the Oriental Tongues than from the Hebrew, and given, as an instance, *Abel* or *Hebel*, which, in their opinion, is more happily deduced from the Syriac words יָהָב אֵיל *Yhab il*, i. e. Deus dedit, or *the Gift of God*.

But is not this giving the same reason for the name of the second son, that Eve gave for the name of her first son? is it not more probable, that *Hebel*, which, in Hebrew, signifies both *vanity* and a *vapour*, should be derived (if it be a derivative) from a *single* Hebrew word, prophetically expressive of
his

his unhappy life, than from *two* Syriac words, of the same import with the name of his brother Cain? can it be supposed that both brothers should have derived their names from different languages? and if not, as one is evidently of Hebrew origin, does it not follow that the other is also?

With as little reason have they likewise objected, that “ a few lucky Paranoma-
“ siæ, or allusions, are no proof in this
“ case;” but whether these be few or casual let the reader judge from the names I have already quoted; many of them existed several hundred years before the Confusion and Dispersion, and all of them still indicate by their signification (if the veracity of Moses may be relied on,) the originality and permanency of the Hebrew Tongue.

And not only the *proper*, but the *common* names or words of this venerable language,

guage, contribute to prove its originality, or, at least, its priority to any other.

To illustrate this observation, I have selected and arranged such Hebrew words, as, I think, must readily suggest their Derivatives in the Greek and Latin Languages, and even in our own, from an obvious correspondence in sound and signification; and, I doubt not, but the same correspondence might be traced between the Hebrew and other languages, both ancient and modern, should any one, competent to the undertaking, take the trouble of comparing them; but, as the vocabulary I have made might occasion too great an interruption in this part of my subject, I have placed it at the end of the Essay, for the sake of such of my readers as may have the curiosity to examine it.

I am aware, however, this argument, founded on a similarity of names, may be made, as it often has been, a subject of
ridicule,

ridicule, and that Swift's idea, of tracing the old Trojan and Græcian names to the British Isles, may be quoted on this occasion: But, though Wit may wanton in such comparisons, it cannot make ridicule a test of truth, nor draw any inference from words, that have only some quaint resemblance in *sound*, to the prejudice of others, that have an evident connexion both in *sound* and *sense*, and whose affinity historical circumstances enable us to account for: Hence, the connexion between Hebrew and the ancient and modern languages of Europe will be no matter of surprise to those who are informed, that the Phœnicians carried on all the Trade of the Mediterranean—that they planted Colonies in the Islands of the Ægean Sea, and even in some of the most Western parts of Europe; their language, therefore, which must have been that of the old Canaanites, from whom they were descended,

scended, i. e. the Hebrew or some Dialect of it, naturally introduced itself into those countries to which they had extended their commerce and navigation: These circumstances may be sufficient to shew, that the words I have selected, and to which I might have added a considerable number more, are a strong presumptive evidence in favour of its originality.

It is objected, that Etymologies, in general, are of too uncertain a nature to build on; *this* I do not deny, nor shall I lay greater stress on them than they are able to bear: All that I contend for is, that the Hebrew claims a preference in this respect, and that its pretensions are considerably strengthened by its *simplicity*, *energy* and *fertility*, as will, in the next place, appear from my 4th argument, founded on the *precision*—yet *copious* and *connected* signification of the Roots.

C H A P. III.

Priority of the Hebrew proved from the Precision and varied Signification of the Roots.
—Objections answered.

THE Roots consist, in general, but of three letters each, and their whole number has been ascertained: Bythner, who followed the order of Buxtorf, has computed, that the radical words in the Bible amount in all but to 2127; from which, if we subtract 260 Chaldean, there will remain 1867 pure Hebrew.

These radical words have, generally, *various*, many of them *figurative*, and some of them even *opposite* significations, which, however seemingly inconsistent, have all a connexion with the Root: Though this connexion is not peculiar to the Hebrew, yet if more natural and easily accounted

H

for

for in *it* than in any other language, it affords a more convincing proof of its originality; for, it is obvious that the first language must have consisted of a very small number of words or roots, to which different significations were annexed, to avoid, as much as possible, the necessity of contriving new ones.

Thus, שׁוּר *shur*, has five significations—viz. to *sing*—a *present*—an *enemy*—a *town-wall*—an *ox*—all derived from the same root, which is, *to observe with earnestness and attention*: Hence,

1st. To look upward with contemplation or joy—to *sing*.

2dly. To look on with pleasure or reverence, as on a person of eminence: Hence, the *present* made for obtaining access to such a one. Is. lvii. 9.

3dly. To look out for prey, to lie in wait: Hence an *enemy*: Jerem. v. 26. Pf. v. 9.

4thly.

4thly. To look abroad, to discover :
Hence a *town-wall*, from the prospect it
gives into the adjacent country : Pf. xviii.
30. (see Bythner's *Lyra* :)— 2 Sam. xxii.
30.

5thly. To look fierce, or steady : Hence
an *ox* ; Pf. lxix. 32. Ex. xxi. 28.

Some Lexicons and Concordances make
the original signification of שׂוּר *cécinit* ;
but, with *this* it would be impossible to
reconcile its other significations, which is
a plain proof of their mistake, *that* being,
in all cases, the true radical meaning of a
word, to which its other meanings may
be most easily and naturally traced.

The word חָלַל *chalal* has also six dif-
ferent significations, viz. to be *wounded*—
to *begin*—to *profane*—to *dance*—a *window*
—a *cake* : yet, all these are connected
with the root, which signifies, to break
the texture of a body by *perforation* :
Hence,

1st. To penetrate the human body, or to *wound*.

2dly. To make an opening or entrance into an affair, to enter upon action or *begin*.

3dly. To break the force of an obligation, to violate the holiness of persons or things—to *profane*.

4thly. A piece of wood perforated, a pipe or flute: Hence, to *dance*. (חליל *chalil* Tibia.)

5thly. A *window* or cave, from the wall or earth being perforated or broken: (חלון *challon* Fenestra.)

6thly. A *cake*—particularly unleavened cakes, such as the Jews make use of, being broad and perforated all over with holes, like a honey-comb, to prevent fermentation: (חלה *challab*.)—See Taylor's Concordance.

There are few words in Scripture that have a greater variety of significations,
with

with less apparent connexion, than the word דבר *dabar*: Yet, an attention to its original meaning will easily account for the rest: This original or radical meaning is, to *connect in order* or *contrive**: Hence,

1st. *Mischief* or *destruction*: 2 Chron. xxii. 10. (דבר *dābār*.)

2dly. A *plague* or *pestilence*—as if, by the *decree* or *order* of Providence: Lev. xxvi. 25. (דבר *deber*.)

3dly. A *word* or *speech*, which requires *order* and *connection*: This is its most general acceptation. (דבר *dābār*.)

4thly. The *Holy of Holies*, where Divine *Answers* were given to the High Priests: 1 K. viii. 6. (דביר *debir*.)

5thly. A *place* to which *sheep* are *led* by the *shepherd*—a *sheepfold*: Mic. ii. 12. (דבר *dober*.)

6thly. A *Wilderness* or *Desert*, where
Flocks

* See Dr. Robertson's *Clavis Pent.* on Gen. xxxiv, 13.

Flocks or Herds are *led* for pasture: Gen. xiv. 6. (מִדְּבָר *midbar*.)

7thly. A *Flote of Timber*, which is *led* or towed along the water: 1 K. v. 9. (דְּבוֹרוֹת *doberoth*.)

8thly. A Bee, or swarm of *Bees*, from their *orderly* government or connexion: Is. vii. 18. Pf. cxviii. 12. (דְּבוֹרָה *deborah*, or דְּבוֹרִים *deborim*.)

9thly. It also signifies *order*, *method* or *manner* in general; but in this sense it is always joined with the preposition על, as על-דְּבוֹרָה *al-dibrab*; and is rather *Chaldee* than Hebrew.

Various, too, are the *figurative* significations of the same word: Thus אֹר *ur*, light, which with us denotes *knowledge*, by an elegant figure, signifies in Scripture *power*, *wealth*, *honour*, *pleasure*, and all kind of happiness. Esth. viii. 16. Job xviii. 6. Pf. xlix. 19.—xcvii. 11.—cxviii. 27.

אֹהֶל *obel*, a Pavilion, Tent or Tabernacle, being the first habitation of mankind, and considered as the seat and centre of all their delights; a man's Tabernacle or dwelling-place, is *figuratively* put for all his possessions and enjoyments: Thus it is said "The Tabernacle of the upright shall flourish." Prov. xiv. 11. Thus also, the Sun's place in the Heavens is called his Tabernacle. Ps. xix. 4.

The same word is taken, not only in *various* and *figurative*, but even in *opposite* senses, which yet are connected with the Root: Thus, the verb שָׁנַן *shaan*, signifies both *tranquility* and *tumult*; a state of perfect ease being commonly attended with careless security and insolence, which are productive of trouble.

Thus also, שָׁבָה *shaba* or *shagna*, signifies to *regard* or *delight* in a thing, and also to *disregard* or *turn aside* from—to *desist*—to be *dismayed*, &c. The radical meaning being,

being, to turn the Eyes *to* or *from* an object, according to the sense of the passage.

Having thus remarked the limited number of primitive words, consisting, in general, but of three letters each, yet branching out into a variety of significations, all naturally springing from the same root: I shall now consider them in a compound form, as augmented by one or two letters at most, which, whether *prefixed* or *affixed* to the radical word, give it the same grammatical effect, that distinct words in other languages possess, and are, consequently, characteristic of the simplicity and energy of this venerable Tongue.

A letter *prefixed*, or joined to the beginning of a word, if a noun or pronoun, may be itself a pronoun *demonstrative*; if to a verb or participle, *relative* or *interrogative*: Such is the article ׀, making, in
each

each case, but one word with that to which it is joined*.

Or, the *Prefix* may be an adverb, as כ— a conjunction, as ו— a preposition, as ל— or, it may indicate comparison, as מ and ב.

It may also connect the sense of what goes before with what follows after, in the several ways of *relation*, *restriction* or *opposition*, by which the various actions of the mind are expressed, as the ו *vau* in the following instances; ומכה אביו ואמו *umakke abiv veimmo*, “and he that smiteth his father, or his mother.” Ex. xxi. 15. In the first of these words, the (ו) *vau* is *conjunctive*, in the third *disjunctive*:— ועבדיך באו לשבר אכל *waabadeka bāu lisb-bar okel*, “but thy servants are come to buy food.” Gen. xlii. 10. Here it is I *discretive*:—

* Thus, הדבר *baddabar*, this thing: ההוא *habu*, he-himself: הפקיד *baphkid*, who is paying a visit: השומר *hasomer*, am I the keeper? &c. Gen. iv. 9.

discretive:—וַיַּחֲיוּ עַשִׂים נֹי נֹי אֱלֹהֵיוֹ *wa-jibu gnosim goi goi Elohaiu*, “nevertheless, “every nation continued to make Gods “of their own.” 2 K. xvii. 29. Here it is *adversative*. Many other examples, were it necessary, might be quoted, of the various senses* in which this single letter is taken at the beginning of a word or sentence.

A letter *affixed*, or joined to the end of a word, may be a pronoun possessive, and generally is so; as דְּבָרִי *debbari*, my word — דְּבָרוֹ *debbaro*, his word, &c. If to the proper name of a place, it may signify motion towards it; as סְדוֹמָה *Sedomah*, towards Sodom — הָרְנָה *Haranah*, towards Haran: Or, it may add force and energy to a word, in which case, it is called *Paragogic*; as תְּמוּתוֹן *temutbun*, “ye shall “surely die.” Gen. iii. 3.

As

* Seventy-three, according to Noldius.

As the simplicity and energy of the Hebrew is apparent from *these*, so is its *fertility* from other considerations—particularly from its *verbs*, and their various significations, in which it has been acknowledged to excel all other Languages ancient or modern: Conjugations, which in Greek and Latin, are different ways of declining *different* verbs, are, in Hebrew, different ways of declining or varying the *same* verb; which variation is expressed under seven distinct forms, that are all produced by a slight change, either of the points in some, or of one or two letters in others: Thus, for instance, a verb may signify some act which we do—or we suffer to be done—or we do with diligence and effect—or which is so done—or we cause another to do—or we are made to do—or we may perform on ourselves: This last (*viz.* the reflex action of a man upon himself) has no corresponding passive, because the same

fon is both Agent and Patient, and from it the Greeks seem evidently to have borrowed their middle voice.

Thus, by these seven flexions or variations of one and the same Root, is expressed all that variety of significations, for which the Hebrew is so remarkable; and what is still more remarkable, a change of conjugation often produces, not only a different, but an opposite meaning: Thus ירש *yarsb* in Kal, is to *possess*—in Niphal (נורש *norash*) to be possessed by another, to be stripped of one's property and *made poor*—in Hiphil (זורש *borish*) to make to possess, to *dispossess* or drive out; for, by causing one's self, or any one else to possess another man's property, we dispossess or drive that man out of his possession.

These various significations are laid down in so confused and incoherent a manner in common Lexicons, that they
seem

seem to have little or no connexion, and often lead a student to consider the Hebrew language as unaccountably arbitrary and perplexed, though in fact they all arise from the primary notion of the root, to which, in many instances, it is impossible to trace them; nor can this be expected in any Tongue, much less in one so figurative as the Hebrew, which, being founded on Hieroglyphic or picturesque representations of objects, abounds with metaphors: Language in its infancy must, from the paucity of words, have been necessarily metaphorical: These figures of speech, which are allowed to be the most natural and elegant conveyance of our thoughts, the writers of the Old Testament have carried much farther than we do, and have applied them in a way, which, though familiar to them, must seem strange to those who are unacquainted

quainted with the manners and employments of the first ages of the world.

And, as the Hebrew is thus distinguished by a variety of significations, branching out from the same original word or root, so is it also by a variety of words, that have very nearly the same signification; for, no language delights more in synonymous terms than the Hebrew: Of this many examples occur throughout the Scriptures—particularly in the Descriptive and Poetical parts of it—a clear proof, not of poverty, but of a richness of language.

Thus, for example, we find not fewer than ten Hebrew names of God, which are as follow :

1st. יהוה *Jehovah*, his proper and peculiar name.

2d. יה *Jah*, an abbreviation of the former. Pf. lxviii. 5.

3d.

3d. אֶהְיֶה *Ehjeb*, I am, or I will be :
These three names, derived from הִיָּה *baja*,
relate to the Essence or eternal existence
of God, and the following to his Attri-
butes.

4th. אֵל *El*, a mighty God. Gen. xiv.
20.—xvii. 1. &c.

5th. אֱלֹהִים *Eloab*,—and

6th. אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*, the same—all de-
rived from אֵיל *ejal*, strength: It is re-
markable that *this* is in the plural num-
ber, and the first name given to God in
Scripture—viz. Gen. i. 1. where it is join-
ed with a verb singular—בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים *bara*
Elohim, and is supposed to imply a *unity*
of the Deity in a Trinity of Persons: This
name, however, is not appropriate to the
Creator, for it is also attributed to Angels,
to Magistrates, and even to Idols, who are
regarded by their worshippers as real Di-
vinities. Ps. viii. 6.—lxxxii. 1.—xcvi. 5.

7th.

7th. אֲדֹנָי *Adonai*, Lord, from אֶדֶן *Eden*, a Base or Column, intimating the all-sustaining power and Providence of God.

8th. שַׁדַּי *Shaddai*, Almighty, from שָׁ put for אֲשֶׁר *asher*, and דַּי *dai*, sufficiency.

9th. יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת *Jehovah Tzebaoth*, Lord of Hosts, that is, the supreme commander of all things in Heaven and Earth.

10th. עֶלְיוֹן *Eljon*, the most high, from עֲלָה *gnala*, which, likewise, intimates his sovereignty over all things: This name corresponds with the Greek ὑψιστος in Luke i. 32.

Among the common words of the language also, we find many instances of the same variety of expression, for conveying one and the same general idea: Thus, אָסַף *asaph*—כָּנַס *canas*—קָבַץ *kabatz*—קָהַל *kahal*, צָבַר *tzabar*, &c. mean, each of them, to collect or gather together*; yet, in describing

* They are generally applied to things scattered or dispersed—

scribing the *collection* and *rise* of the waters in Genesis, (vii. 17 and 18,) not one of these is made use of, but the following very different verbs—viz. ירבו *yirbu*—ישו *yifu*—תרום *taram*—יגברו *yigberu*: And in describing their *fall* too, we may perceive the same richness and variety of expression, in the 8th. Ch. informing us of their subsiding, (ישכו *yashku*)—returning, (ישבו *yashbu*)—decreasing, (יחסרו *yachseru*)—drying up, (יבשת *yebosheth*)—becoming light, (הקלו *bakallu*), or exhaling—of being exhausted, (חרבו *charebu*), or drained off.

The beauty and energy of synonymous terms, in the Hebrew, will not appear to

K a reader,

perfed—as riches—corn—wine—oil, &c. (Pf. xxxix. 7. Gen. xli. 35. Deut. xi. 14. &c.) But אסף *asaph*, is often applied to things already gathered, and signifies, in a good sense, to remove them for *preservation*, Is. lvii. 1.—or, in a bad sense, to *destroy* them. Jer. viii. 13. And קהל *kahal*, in a proper sense, only to a body of people assembled for civil or religious purposes.

a reader, who is unacquainted with their *radical* and *ideal* difference; for there are few but what admit of nice discriminations: Thus, שׁוּר *shur*, and זָמַר *zimmer*, signify, each of them, to sing or celebrate; there is, however, a difference, the former being applied to any kind of song, and the latter to psalmody, or sacred music—its proper subject being a regular and correct composition, in which every thing superfluous is cut off, from זָמַר *zamar*, to prune,

רָנַן *ranan*, and הִרְיַע *beriang* (from רוּעַ *ruang*) have, each, the same meaning with the preceding verbs, but in a higher degree, and properly signify to exert the voice strongly, whether through joy or sorrow—to rejoice aloud or exult: They differ however in this, that *beriang* is applied—not only to the voice of men, but to the sound of a trumpet; hence to sound an alarm before an engagement—to

to shout for victory—to shout for joy : Its superior energy to that of *tanan*, with which it is often joined, is happily preserved in our English version of that sublime passage of Job, where the Angels are represented as rejoicing and praising God, at the time of the creation of this visible world, “ when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Job xxxviii. 7. But it is not so well marked in other parts of our translation, ex. gr. Ps. lxxxix. 1.

It is unnecessary to multiply instances of terms thus used as synonymous in our English Versions, yet possessing radical discriminations, that cannot be expressed, with the same force, in any other Tongue: What I have already quoted are, I trust, sufficient to shew, not only the *fertility* and *energy* of the Hebrew, but, in some degree also, its *originality* and *perfection*.

Before I proceed to my next argument respecting the *Letters*, it may be necessary to consider some objections to the *nature* of the language itself.

1st. It has been objected, that the paucity of Hebrew words, or roots, is no proof of the originality of the language, as it may be ascribed to the confined circumstances and situation of the Hebrews, which secluded them from commercial intercourse, and, consequently, prevented them from enriching it by the addition of foreign words or phrases: But, I have already shewn, and, I hope, fully proved, the copiousness of the Hebrew language independent on such a consideration, not only from the *various* and *connected* signification of the roots, but from the number of roots that have, generally speaking, but *one* and the same signification: The nice discrimination too, as well as the energy and number of these synonymous terms,

terms, is a decisive proof of the richness of the Hebrew—a richness, which, had it arisen, like that of other languages, from external and adventitious causes, would be no mark of originality, and would be utterly subversive of its purity.

2dly. It is objected, that the essential difference of languages is to be taken, principally, from Grammars, and, that *Affixes*, and other characteristics of nouns and verbs, which distinguish the Hebrew from Greek, Latin, and the languages of the West and North, do not distinguish it from the Chaldee, Syriac and Arabic, and, consequently, do not prove its superior antiquity to those Eastern Tongues, which have the same forms and fundamentals with itself.

To this it may be replied, that the general likeness observable in the frame of these kindred Tongues, shews them to be the offspring of the Hebrew; for, even in
an

an elementary point of view, there appears to be more simplicity and precision, more of that pure and primitive cast of the Patriarchal ages, in the Hebrew than in the Arabic, or any other known language ancient or modern.

In the Arabic, for instance, the verbs of three letters each (for many of them consist of more) have thirteen conjugations*; the Hebrew but seven: The former have three numbers in each mood, except the infinitive; the latter, but two: In Arabic, the nouns have three cases in each number—nominative, genitive and accusative, that are distinguished by three terminations; in Hebrew, they are distinguished but by one, as *ישׁ ish*, a man—*ישׁים ishim*, men; besides, the *radical* words in Arabic greatly exceed those in the Hebrew: And, as all that remains

pure

* Erpennius's Arabic Grammar.

pure of the latter is contained in the Books of the Old Testament, in which some particular words occur but once, and others but twice, the true meaning of such words cannot be easily discovered, without sometimes resorting to a kindred dialect—particularly the Arabic, which is usually consulted on such occasions: It is, therefore, no matter of surprise, that the Hebrew, which has ceased to be a living language, and is confined within the compass of a single volume, should have fewer words than the Arabic, which has long been cultivated in uninterrupted security.

The Hebrew has also fewer letters than the Arabic, which is an additional proof of its comparative precision; for its Alphabet consists but of twenty-two letters, the Arabic of twenty-eight: This leads me to consider what I proposed for my fifth argument, on which I shall now more particularly insist,

insist, from a persuasion of its importance in the present controversy; for, if it shall appear, that the Hebrew Alphabet is the parent of the rest, or prior to any other, it will furnish a strong presumptive evidence, that the language, to which it belongs, is itself the first and original language.

PART II.

ALPHABETIC LETTERS.

Samaritan.		Hebrew	
		Their numeral value.	
Ⲁ ⲁ Ⲃ ⲃ Ⲅ ⲅ Ⲇ ⲇ Ⲉ ⲉ Ⲋ ⲋ Ⲍ ⲍ Ⲏ ⲏ Ⲑ ⲑ Ⲓ ⲓ Ⲕ ⲕ Ⲍ Ⲇ ⲇ Ⲉ ⲉ Ⲋ ⲋ Ⲍ ⲍ Ⲏ ⲏ Ⲑ ⲑ Ⲓ			

P A R T II.

ON THE
PRIORITY AND PERMANENCY
OF THE PRESENT
HEBREW LETTERS.

CHAP IV.

*Origin of Alphabetic Writing in general, and
of the Hebrew Alphabet in particular—
Objections answered—Dr. Kennicott's re-
mark.*

ALPHABETS being only arrangements
of those Elementary Characters which are
the signs of sound, it will be necessary to
consider the origin of the latter, in order
to ascertain the antiquity of the former.

On this subject ancient History gives no certain information; but, we may collect from thence, that the contest for the honour of the invention of Letters may be confined to those nations, that were the first inhabited after the Flood—viz. the Chaldeans, Phœnicians, Egyptians, &c. If long and uninterrupted possession of the same country give a preference in this respect, the Arabs, who inhabited theirs for upwards of 3700 years, without intermixing with other nations, or being subjugated by any foreign Power, would have the best claim; but, the letters they now use, called the *Niskhi*, were not formed until about 300 years after Mahomet, and even the most ancient were not invented by the Arabs, as their own authors confess*.

If

* Asse on the Origin and Progress of Writing, ch. 3. p. 42, &c. Richardson's Dissertation on the Languages, Literature and Manners of Eastern Nations, p. 10.

If we attend to commercial considerations, the Phœnicians will appear to have the best claim, as they were the first and greatest commercial nation of antiquity; it is, therefore, probable, that they communicated letters to the Egyptians and other nations, who traded to the celebrated ports of Tyre and Sidon.

But, if Astronomical attainments be attended to, the Chaldeans, who cultivated this science in the remotest ages, and used in their calculations symbols or arbitrary marks, which are the parents of letters, would have the best title to the honour of the invention—a title too, which is supposed to gain considerable strength from the testimony of Pliny, who is of opinion, that letters are of Assyrian or Chaldean origin.

This writer, however, who is quoted so often on this occasion, does not seem to have a clear or consistent idea of the matter,

ter, as will appear on comparing the 13th Ch. of his 5th Book, with the 57th Ch. of the 7th. In the former, he gives the honour of the invention to the Phœnicians in these words, "*ipfa gens Phœnicum in magnâ gloriâ literarum inventionis,*" &c. and, in the latter, to the Assyrians, "*litteras semper arbitror Assyrias fuisse;*" what immediately follows shews the diversity of opinions that prevailed in his time on the subject, "*sed alii apud Egyptos, alii apud Syros repperas volunt, utique in Græciam intulisse e Phœnice Cadmum sedecim numero,*" &c.

Such, then, being the uncertainty of ancient history on the origin of letters, I shall now consider what information the Mosaic affords us on this subject.

The first mention of writing, recorded in the Scriptures, occurs in **Exod. xvii. ch. 14 v.** where the Lord is said to have
commanded

commanded *Moses* to write the victory of Joshua over the Amalakites, "for a memorial in a book." But, it is evident, he would not have received such a command, had he been ignorant of the art of writing; and, it is equally evident, that the Israelites could not have received their letters first from Moses, through the giving of the law; for, though this was written in letters engraved by God himself, and given to Moses for their use, the Israelites must have understood them, before the giving of the law, else, to what purpose was it written and brought to them?

It is unquestionable, therefore, that letters were in use before the time of Moses; but, at what particular period, or by whom they were invented, has not been ascertained: Some have attributed their invention to Adam, on this principle, that he could not have lived so long, without knowing

knowing their importance to society, especially, in Arts and Sciences, some of which were in use before the Flood*—that Astronomy, in particular, must have engaged his attention, from the sublimity of the objects presented constantly to his view, and the distinction made by them of days, months and years, which must have enabled him, by degrees, to acquire a knowledge of it, and, consequently, of letters so necessary to its cultivation.

Walton, who has adopted this opinion, and supported it, on the authority of learned writers†, further adds, that “Seth
“learned

* Thus, we read in the 4th Chap. of Gen. that *Tubal*, one of Cain's Great Grandsons, was the father of all such as handle the Harp and Organ; and that another *Tubal-Cain* was the instructor of every Artificer in brass and iron.

† As *Suidas*, in voce *Adap.*—*Bibliander*—*Gesner* and others. See *Walton's Proleg.* 2. S. 7.—See also *Hermannus Hugo* (de primâ scribendi origine) who is of opinion, that the Hebrew letters were the first, p. 42. The author of the book of *Cofri* (p. 4. f. 25,) and his commentator *R. Juda Muscatus* hold that they were known to Adam. Fol. 229—1.

“ learned them from Adam, and, that
 “ from Seth they descended with the ori-
 “ ginal language to Noah and his poste-
 “ rity, with whom they continued to the
 “ Confusion ; after which, when new cha-
 “ racters, in the progress of time, were
 “ invented with new languages, yet, the
 “ old were preserved among those who had
 “ retained the primæval tongue.”

What these old characters were—whether the same with the present Hebrew, Arabic or Samaritan, is the question now to be considered—a question, that may best be determined, by recurring to the first formation of elementary characters in general, and of the *Hebrew Alphabet* in particular.

With respect to the origin of the shape of elementary characters or letters, different opinions have been entertained ; some deriving their form from the *position of the organs of speech*, in their pronunciation,

as if they could not be rightly founded, without disposing the organs into an uniform position with the figure of each letter.

Others have endeavoured to prove, that they derive it from the *line* and *circle*; and others, again, from *Hyeroglyphic similitudes**: Of these similitudes there were two different species before letters were invented; the first and most natural expressed ideas by *representation*, i. e. by tracing out the images of things, being a kind of picture writing, as that in use among the Mexicans: The second denoted things by *symbols*, when any quaint resemblance or analogy could be found, and was in use among the Egyptians: Then succeeded an *arbitrary institution* of *marks*, according to the fancy or caprice of those who formed them—such as, in progress of time,

* Monsieur Van Helmont and de Bros maintain the first of these opinions; M. Nelme the second; and M. Gebelin in his *Monde Primitif* (Tom. 3. 4^o.) the third.

time, obtained among the Chinese, and the most civilized nations of the world.

Thus, Hieroglyphic symbols being in general use among mankind before letters were known, the invention of the latter was nothing more than the transferring the former methods of representation to the elements of sound; and, as there are more sounds in some languages than in others, it has been hence concluded, that the number of elementary characters or letters must vary in the Alphabets of different languages*: Thus, the Hebrew, Syrian and Samaritan Alphabets have 22 Letters; the Arabic 28; the Persian and Egyptian or Coptic 32; but the Chinese, who have no Alphabet, are said to have as many different characters as there are words in their language†.

M 2

“ The

* Asse, Ch. 2. p. 20.

† These characters amount to no less than 80,000, of which

“ The not attending to this natural and
 “ easy progress of Hieroglyphic images,
 “ from pictures to Alphabetic letters,
 “ (says Dr. Warburton) made some among
 “ the ancients, as Plato and Tully, con-
 “ clude that an Alphabet was no human
 “ invention, but a gift of the immortal
 “ Gods *.” And, indeed, if any Alphabet
 now existing could pretend to a Divine
 original, the Hebrew will appear to have
 the best title to it, from the beautiful
 structure of its letters, which are not to
 be considered as mere marks, like the
 Greek and Roman letters, but *ideal or sig-*
nificant—each denoting some figure, to
 which it bears an analogy or resemblance:
 Hence they may be defined, *contracted de-*
lineations of the objects which they signify.

Thus

which the generality of the learned are not masters of more
 than 15 or 20,000: And there are few Doctors who go
 beyond 40,000. See Du Halde, tom II. p. 224, &c.

* Divine Legation, 3 v. 4 b. p. 92.

Thus, the first Letter

אֵלֶף *Aleph*, signifies an *ox*, to the head and horns of which it has some similitude; and, as it also signifies a *Captain* or *Leader*, it is aptly placed at the head of the Alphabet. See Jer. xi. 19. Pf. lv. 14. Gen. xxxvi. 15—19.

בֵּית *Beth*, a *receptacle*, or place where any thing is contained or laid up. Ex. xxv. 27. 1 K. xviii. 32.

Hence, a *bouse*, or receptacle for man, the roof of which among the Hebrews was flat. Gen. xvii. 12.

A *den*, or receptacle for wild beasts. Job xxxix. 6.

A *sepulchre* or grave. Eccl. xii. 5.

By way of eminence it signifies a *temple*. 1 K. vi. 1, 2.

And, in the plural, a *canopy* or pavilion with hangings to form a
receptacle

receptacle for an idol. 2 K. xxiii.

27. (Parkh. Lex.)

גִּמְלָה *Gimel*, a *camel*, from a resemblance to the long neck of this animal, and the bunch on its back. If. xxi. 7.

It comes from the verb גָּמַל *gamal*, to recompence.

דַּלְתַּח *Daleth*, a *door*, gate, or leaf of a door or gate, which turns upon hinges : It differs from פֶּתַח *pathach*, which signifies a porch or outer door. See Gen. xix. 6.

הָא *He* : It is not known at present what this letter signifies and represents.

וָא *Vau*, a *hook*, such as those upon which the curtain and veil of the temple hung. Ex. xxvii. 10.

זַיִן *Zain*, a *fabre* : armour in general. Deut. xxiii. 13. 1 K. xxii. 38.

חַבֶּתֶת *Cheth*, a *quadruped* or *beast*—particularly a *wild* beast, as being more vigorous

vigorous and *lively* than the rest:
To this the figure, in its position,
bears a resemblance. Gen. i. 27.—
1 Sam. xvii. 46. from חיה *chaja*, to
live.

טית *Teth*, signifies *twisting* or involving,
from טוה *tavah*, to spin. Ex. xxxv.
26.—According to Schindler, from
נטה *inclinare*.

יוד *Yod*, a *band*, of which it resembles
the finger: and, that it is sometimes
taken for part of a thing appears
from Gen. xlvii. 24. 2 Sam. xix. 43.

כף *Capb*, the hollow of any thing, as
of the *band*—of the thigh or huckle-
bone: a hollow vessel—the bend of
a sling—of the skies, &c. Lev. xiv.
15. Gen. xxxii. 25. Num. vii. 84.
1 Sam. xxv. 29. Job xxxvi. 32.
from כפף *caphaph*, to bend.

למד *Lamed*, or מלמד *malmad*, a *goad* or
whip, by which oxen are broken to
the

the plough : Jud. iii. 31. from לָמַד *lamad*, to instruct.

מֶם *Mem*, a *spot* or blemish—such, says Schindler, as is impressed on the hollow of the hand. Lev. xxi. 17. 2 Sam. 14. 25. מוֹם *mum*, vitium, macula.

נֹן *Nun*, a child or *son*, and it resembles one in a sitting posture. Prov. xxix. 21. Job. xviii. 19. (נִיֵּן)

סֶמֶךְ *Samech*, a *prop* or support—the pedestal of a column, from סָמַךְ *samak*, to sustain. Jud. xvi. 29. Ps. xxxvii. 24.—cxii. 8.

עֵין *Gnain*, an *eye*, which it represents open : It also signifies a fountain, &c. Prov. xxii. 9. Gen. xvi. 7.

פֶּה *Phe*, a *mouth* open : The mouth of a well, &c. Ex. iv. 10, 11. Gen. xxix. 3.

צַדִּי *Tzadi*, a kind of *forked instrument* or snare used in hunting and catching
ing

ing game; from צד *tzad*, a side, or צדה, to approach cautiously or sideways—to pursue. Eccles. vii. 27. Ezek. xii. 13. Jud. ii. 3. Gen. xxvii. 3.

קוף *Koph*, a *marmoset*, or monkey with a long tail, so called on account of its antic tricks, and frequent circumgyrations, as part of the figure represents, from יקף *jacaph*, circumire. Ps. xix. 7. 1 K. x. 22. (see Parkh. Lex.)

רש *Resh*, the *head*, of which it resembles the hinder part or *poll*: The top of any thing, as of a mountain, &c. Gen. iii. 15. Ex. xxxiv. 2. לראש *lerosh*, to every man, i. e. reckoning by the head or *poll*. See Jud. v. 30.

שן *Shin*—teeth, and it resembles a *trident*—an elephant's tooth or ivory—the point of a rock, &c. Ex. xxi.

24. 1 K. x. 18. 1 Sam. xiv. 4. from
שָׁנָן *shanan*, to sharpen.

תָּו *Tau*, a mark or boundary: Hence
it bounds the Alphabet; from תוּה
or תַּחַה *taa*, define. Ezek. ix. 4.
Num. xxxiv. 7.

Why the letters were arranged in this
order it is not easy to say: The most pro-
bable reason seems to be, the facility with
which their names succeed each other in
the series: Thus נ closes the lips, and ב
opens them, and this aperture prepares
the tongue for the pronounciation of the
next letter ג, and this again begins, by
another aperture, the name of ד, and so
on in general through the series.

Such is the Alphabetic arrangement of
the Hebrew letters, as recorded in the
holy Scriptures: Of its origin and anti-
quity we have no certain account; but
we know that it existed in the days of
David, by whom most of the Psalms were
written—

written—particularly the 25th and 34th, in which this arrangement takes place: The intention of it, in these and a few other parts of the Hagiographa, was probably of a technical nature, to assist the memory, but its principal peculiarity consists in the *simple* and *significant form* of the letters—a peculiarity, that distinguishes it from all other Alphabets: The Hiberno-Celtic or Irish letters, supposed to be derived from the old Phœnician, are said to be denominated from different sorts of trees*; but, they have no manner of resemblance to the things signified; whereas, in the Hebrew Alphabet, the figures answer to the signification of their names.

Should it be objected, that the likeness between the sign and the thing signified is not sufficiently strong in some of the letters, to justify this explanation of their

N 2 structure—

* Vallancey's Irish Gram. p. 10.

structure—as, for instance, in א, י and מ,
 I reply, that if the resemblance in this
 partial representation of animals had been
 more striking, it would, probably, be too
 picturesque for *use*, and too hieroglyphical
 for the *law*, which forbid all such images
 or likenesses of things, as might lead to
 idolatry: However this be, the like-
 ness in these, and the other letters of
 the Alphabet, is sufficiently obvious to ex-
 cite an idea of the things intimated by
 their names, and a due veneration for
 them, as the vehicles of Religion; and,
 consequently, to preserve them in their
 original purity; “Alphabetic characters
 “being (as Dr. Warburton has justly re-
 “marked*,) a matter of much import-
 “ance to the Hebrews, as to the inte-
 “grity of their religion.”

It has, indeed, been remarked, that
 “the names of the letters, though al-
 “lowed

* Divine Leg. ii. vol. 3d ed. p. 150.

“lowed to be of real signification, have
 “yet been adapted from fancy or acci-
 “dent, rather than from reason or studied
 “propriety, as if the master, to divert the
 “scholar, and make him remember the
 “letters, should liken them to certain
 “things, saying, this א is like the head
 “of an ox—ב like an house—ג a camel,
 “&c *.” To this I also reply, that,
 though fancy or accident might have sug-
 gested a few significant names, it is in the
 highest degree improbable it could have
 suggested the whole number, when, in
 every other ancient Alphabet, there is
 scarce a single letter susceptible, from any
 analogy or resemblance, of a correspond-
 ing appellation: Could it be owing, for
 instance, to fancy or accident, that א *aleph*,
 which signifies an instructor or *guide*, and
 also an ox—the leader of his kind, should
 rank

* This remark has been taken from Dr. Anselm Bayly's
 Hebrew Grammar, p. 3 and 4.

rank first in the Alphabet? or that ט *tau*, which signifies a *boundary*, should close it? are not these names, and the order they are placed in, as strong proofs, as could be given, of reason and *studied propriety*, in the structure of the Alphabet? and was there less reason or propriety manifested in assimilating the other letters—not only to the simplest and most striking features and members of the human form, but also, to such animals and inventions, as, in the early ages of the world, were most conducive to man's convenience and protection?

It may be further objected, that such beautiful and well-formed letters, as the present Hebrew, could not be the first efforts in Alphabetic writing; it being contrary to the analogy of every art, in which we find simplicity and beauty to be the slow produce of time and attention.

To

To this I answer, that these letters, however beautiful and regular, are yet of a *significant* and *symbolic* form, which is a criterion of originality; the ducts of them are plain and natural, and taken from such objects, as either indicated the wants, or administered to the necessities of the first inhabitants of the world — not one of them resembling any of the arts or inventions of improved society, which might give a colour to the objection, nor yet exhibiting so perfect a representation of the things signified, as might lead to idolatry: Do not these circumstances sufficiently prove them the first efforts, under the Divine direction, in Alphabetic writing? and render it highly probable also, that they have been always kept pure in their original form? whereas the Greek, Roman and other European letters, having no restrictive principles, from *analogy* or *religion*, to preserve them, have varied
with

with the languages to which they respectively belong, and may, therefore, be very properly said to have acquired their simplicity and beauty, from the gradual improvements of attention and time.

In Alphabets, that have not the same pretensions to originality with the Hebrew, Dr. Kennicot's remark may have considerable weight—viz. “ that letters
 “ more complicated are naturally reduced
 “ by degrees to letters that are less complicated, and wrote with more ease
 “ and expedition;” but, I deny the inference he has drawn*—viz. that the Jews, who had many more sacred books to transcribe than the Samaritans, and transcribed them more frequently “ would
 “ *study* to lessen their labour by reducing
 “ their letters to forms as simple as possible—for instance, the Samaritan *𐤎*
yod

* Differ. ii. vol. p. 157.

“ *yod* to the Hebrew form —  to י —
 “  to ז —  to ל —  to מ — 
 “ to נ,” &c. The obvious dissimilarity
 in these, and other letters, renders the
 alteration here represented highly impro-
 bable, if not unnatural; not to mention,
 that any change, proceeding from *study* or
 design, would be utterly inconsistent with
 that respect and veneration, in which the
 Jews always held whatever related to their
 Law—particularly the Characters in which
 it was engraved—Characters, that of all
 others seem the best adapted to the pur-
 pose; for, the Hebrew letters have a
 strength and neatness, that shew them to
 have been originally formed for durability
 — nay more, they “ have in them,” as
 the learned Dr. Anselm Bayly expresses it,
 “ something curious and surprising, whose
 “ form and order are evidently the ori-
 “ ginal and ground-work of every Alpha-
 “ bet now in being.” Heb. Gram. p. 5.

Some slight variation of shape, I admit, must have arisen, in the different copies, that were taken from the original or autograph of Moses, arising from the different skill and care of the transcribers; but, this is no more an objection to the perfection and permanency of the letters themselves, than a variation in the shape of manuscript letters in our own language—such as we daily perceive in the handwriting of different persons, would be to their true and genuine form in copper-plate or print.

CHAP.

C H A P. V.

Dr. Kennicott's partiality to the Samaritan Pentateuch—an instance from the celebrated Controversy before King Ptolemy concerning Gerizim and Ebal—the Samaritan Pentateuch not memorable for high Antiquity—is but a version from one of Ezra's Copies—this proved by Hottinger from the similitude of the Hebrew Letters—and from three Samaritan Copies—Dr. Kennicott's Objections—ill founded—and his reasoning inconclusive.

IT is not without extreme diffidence, that I presume to differ in opinion, on *this* or any other point, from so great an authority as Dr. Kennicott; yet, truth requires me to declare, that, on this and every other occasion, he appears to me to have shewn a strong prepossession in fa-

vour of the Samaritans — especially, in whatever relates to the credit of their Pentateuch : Thus, for instance, in the celebrated controversy between them and the Jews, concerning the Mount which was to be dignified with the Law and the Altar, and which is written *Ebal* in the Jewish, and *Gerizim* in the Samaritan copies, (Deut. xxvii. 4,) the corruption, which they charged upon each other in this part of the text, he attributes to the Jews, though an host of the most respectable authorities—as he himself has admitted, have ascribed it to the Samaritans; and, though the *motive* for corrupting the text in question (which in a doubtful point is of considerable consequence,) was much stronger on the side of the latter, than the former; for, upon rebuilding the Jerusalem Temple, the Samaritans offered their assistance in this work, in order to worship *there*, in conjunction with the Jews,

Jews, (*Ezra* iv. 1,) which proved their consciousness of its superior sanctity to that of any other place; but, Zerubabel and the rest of the Elders of Israel rejected their offer, because they were not of the seed of Israel: This rejection determined them to give every opposition in their power to the rebuilding this temple, and, afterwards, to erect one for themselves on Mount Gerizim: Is it not then natural to suppose, that resentment and pride would, under these circumstances, have conspired to prompt them to any artifice they could devise, for the purpose of giving respect and authority to their newly erected temple, and, consequently, to commit the corruption imputed to them—of substituting Gerizim instead of Ebal? The Jews had not the same temptation to fraud; the authority and dignity of their temple, at Jerusalem, had been long established and acknowledged; it was not only

only built by the direction of God himself, (1 Chron. xxii.) but consecrated also by his divine presence, for "the glory of the Lord filled the house;" (2 Chron. vii. 1, 2.) and, in the same place, where at first it was built, it was re-erected after the Babylonish Captivity, and the same sacrifices and service were offered up there as before, until the schism of Manasseh, by all the true worshippers of God. Prid. Conn. part 1. b. vi. p. 421.

These particulars sufficiently prove, that the Jews could have no doubt of the superior sanctity of their temple to that at Gerizim; and cannot, therefore, be well supposed to have recourse to fraud in support of it: Accordingly, when, after the building of a Jewish temple in *Egypt* by Onias, a seditious tumult, (as Josephus informs us,) arose in that country between *them* and the Samaritans on the same head, and both parties appealed to

Ptolemy

Ptolemy the King; he decreed, after a public hearing, in favor of the Temple at Jerufalem, and ordered, that the Samaritan Advocates should be put to death*.

But, Dr. Kennicott asserts, that the Samaritans had an unfair judge in Ptolemy, and also contends, that they did not corrupt the text in Deut. already mentioned, because the Jews did not, at that time, attempt to convict them of it, when such a corruption, if made by the Samaritans, might have been easily proved: For, “suppose it made, says he, “immediately after the Gerizim Temple “was built, about 400 Years before “Christ; and that this contest happened “about 150 Years before Christ; certainly “the Jews had *then* MSS. more than 250 “Years old—probably, some wrote hundreds of years before the building that
Temple,

* Josephi Antiquit. l. 13. c. vii.

“ temple, and, therefore, very long be-
 “ fore the supposed corruption: And,
 “ had only one old Hebrew MS. been
 “ produced, fairly reading עִבְלִי *Ebal* in
 “ the text in question, the Samaritans
 “ had been convicted righteously; but,
 “ no such authorities were produced—
 “ *not one* such authority was even pretend-
 “ ed—the Jew just mentioned the Law,
 “ and talked a great deal of (what was
 “ nothing to the purpose) the succession
 “ of their Priests and the glory of their
 “ Temple—whilst the poor Samaritans
 “ were not so much as heard, but cru-
 “ elly put to death.”

Whether the account given by Jose-
 phus will justify these remarks, let the
 reader judge from the following extract
 from it, as made by Dr. Kennicott him-
 self. ii. vol. p. 68.

“ Both parties appealed to Ptolemy,
 “ requesting a public hearing, and agree-
 “ ing, that the Advocates defeated should
 “ suffer

“ suffer death—Andronicus (the Jewish
 “ Advocate) began his proofs from the
 “ Law, and the succession of the high-
 “ priests, setting forth, how each, receiv-
 “ ing the honour from his father, presided
 “ over the Temple, and that all the kings
 “ of Asia had honoured the *holy place* of
 “ the Jews with magnificent presents;
 “ whereas, no one had respected the
 “ Temple at Gerizim, any more than if
 “ it had never been; by which, and *se-*
 “ *veral other similar proofs*, the king was
 “ persuaded to decree—that building the
 “ Temple at Jerusalem was authorized
 “ by the Law of Moses; and that the
 “ Samaritans should be put to death.”

Here the Historian tells us, in general terms, that the Jewish Advocate *began his proofs from the Law*, (according to which both parties had sworn they would produce their proofs,) but, because he has not stated the particulars, Dr. Kennicott infers, that no such proof was

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given,

given, as the corruption of the text in Deut. xxvii. 4. But, who can pretend to say, what particular proof was not given on this occasion? especially, as we are told, that by *several other similar proofs*, the king was persuaded to decree in favour of the Jerusalem Temple—*several other similar proofs*! i. e. similar to those, that had been just mentioned by the Historian, relative to the Law, as the succession of its Priests, and the place where it was honoured: Might not then Mount *Ebal* have been mentioned among these *similar proofs*, as bearing on the subject, and the authority of an *old Hebrew Manuscript reading עיבלי Ebal in the Text in question*, have been produced by the Jews, and objected to by the Samaritans *then* as well as now?—for, such a Manuscript, had it been produced, must have been more than 250 years old, this being the interval, according to Dr. Kenicott's calculation, between the supposed corruption

corruption and the present contest: But the Dr. adds, “ the poor Samaritans were “ not heard ”—The Historian does not say so, nor does it follow that they were not heard, because he has been silent in this particular—he hastened to the decision against them, for which Ptolemy could have had no motive but what was dictated by truth and the desire of suppressing a disturbance in his kingdom—a disturbance, that arose merely from a dispute, in which the holiness of *Jerusalem* was opposed to the holiness of *Gerizim*, and which, therefore, from its nature, could have no unfair influence on the royal arbitration.

It should be remarked too, that the king did not rely merely on his own judgment in deciding this important cause; for, *having taken with him many friends to consult with, he sat down to hear the Advocates plead* (ὁ μὲν ἐν βασιλεὺς Πολλὰς τῶν φίλων εἰς συμβουλίαν παραλαβὼν ἐκαθίσεν ἀκροαμένος τῶν λεγούτων)—not the Advo-

cates on one side, surely, but on both; for such is the import of the words των λεγόντων: Why has Dr. K. suppressed this material passage in his extract? is it not, because it clearly bespeaks, on the side of the king, a patient hearing and an equitable decision, which it suited not his purpose to allow? Nor does he content himself with arraigning the justice of the arbitration—he questions even the truth of the account itself, (and this too, on no better authority than that of the Samaritans, who say, that *Ptolemy decreed the victory to them*)—concluding from the whole of the matter “ either that
 “ the merits of the cause, as founded
 “ on the Law of Moses, were not gone
 “ into at all; or else, that they turned
 “ out so unfavourable to the Jews, that
 “ this, their own Historian, has thought
 “ proper to suppress the particular mention of them; whereas, had they been
 “ favourable, they must have furnished
 “ him

“ him with matter of *the greatest triumph*.”

Such is our Author's imputation on the testimony of one of the most respectable Historians of antiquity; and such his predilection for the Samaritans—the poor Samaritans! as he calls them, but who are handed down to us, as a mean, mongrel race of people—ever ready to claim kindred with the Jews in their prosperity, and equally ready to disclaim it in their adversity: Witness their conduct in the persecution of Antiochus, to escape which, they not only renounced all connection with the Jews, but abandoned the God of Israel, and dedicated their Temple to the *Græcian Jupiter* * that very Temple of Gerizim, for whose sanctity they afterwards so zealously contended—even to a pre-eminence over that at Jerusalem: Mr. Maundrel, in his journey

* Joseph. Antiq. l. 12. cap. 7. and 10. 1 Macab. 3. 10.

journey from Aleppo to this city, made some enquiry into the grounds of that pre-eminence, and tells us, that he passed between *Ebal* and *Gerizim*, upon one of which it was, that God commanded the children of Israel to set up great stones plaistered over, and inscribed with the body of their Law, and to erect an Altar—and that “ halting a little while at Naplose, he had an opportunity to go “ and visit the chief Priest of the Samaritans, in order to discourse with him “ about this and other difficulties in the “ Pentateuch.” The result of their conversation he gives us in these words: “ The Samaritan Priest could not say, “ that any of those great stones, which “ God directed Joshua to set up, were “ now to be seen in Mount Gerizim; “ which, were they now extant, would “ determine the question clearly on his “ side*.”

This,

* Maundrel's Journey: Oxford Ed. 1707. p. 61.

This, indeed, would have been a *substantial* proof, which they never were able to produce—no, not even in the contest before Ptolemy, which happened above 1850 years earlier: But a corrupt Manuscript they had always ready, for such it appeared to be, in the present instance, to the best critics who examined it—viz. Hottinger—Lightfoot—Patrick—Usher—Prideaux—Walton, and many others.

But, with the integrity or corruption of texts, I did not intend to concern myself farther, than as they may affect the language or characters that record them: These are the proper objects of my present enquiry; and I humbly conceive, that no argument hitherto advanced, in favour of the Samaritan Pentateuch, will prove it either memorable for *high antiquity*, in the sense that Dr. K. represents it—much less, that “in its character it “is the most ancient*.” These are
points

* ii V. Differ. p. 305.

points of such considerable consequence in the present question, as make it necessary to give them a more particular discussion.

I have already remarked (Part I. Page 19, &c.) that, after the ten tribes had been carried into captivity, the Samaritans who succeeded them, and the few scattered Israelites who were left in the land, had no Pentateuch or book of the Law among them—that the captive Priest, sent to instruct them, probably taught from Tradition, and not from the Law, which forbade that idolatry, which they pretended to renounce, but in which they continued till the arrival of Manasseh—some worshipping one God, and some another, according to the different Religions of the countries from whence they came: I have also remarked, that, if he had brought them a copy of the Law, it is by no means probable they preserved it, through
the

the long period that elapsed, before the old superstition of the land was reformed, by Manasseh, to the worship of the God of Israel: For, after this we hear no more of their former Idolatries—of the worship of *Succoth Beroth* or *Venus* (in whose Temple young virgins were obliged to prostitute themselves once in their lives)—of *Nergal*, a perpetual fire—of *Asbima*, the host of Heaven or firmament—of the *Sun*—of *Moloch* or *Saturn*, &c.

These circumstances lead us naturally to conclude, that the Pentateuch they possessed, when this great reformation was wrought among them, was transcribed from one of Ezra's copies, which Manasseh brought with him from Jerusalem, into the Samaritan character, whence it had its name; this conclusion, not to insist on the interpolations of Ezra's copy being contained in the Samaritan, is confirmed by Hottinger's observation—viz. that *the*

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variations

variations in the Samaritan copy from the Hebrew are such as were occasioned in the transcribing, by the mistake of letters similar in the Hebrew, but not at all similar in the Samaritan.*

To this argument, which is founded on the principles of the language itself, Dr. Kennicott objects for the following reasons; 1st "because all reasoning at present upon the similitude of ancient letters must be of itself undecisive, unless there be delivered down the exact forms of those ancient letters †." To this I reply, that their exact forms have been delivered down, as I trust appears from my explanation of the Hebrew Alphabet, and also from the high veneration always manifested by the Jews for whatever related to their Religion; consequently, Hottinger is so far right.

2dly.

* Exercit. Anti. Mor. p. 44, 53.

† ii Vol. Dissert. p. 133, &c.

2dly. He objects, that it is built upon false principles, “ for does not one glance
 “ of the Eye, says he, discover, that some
 “ of the letters produced as *similar in the*
 “ *Hebrew* are not similar at all?—such
 “ as N and Y—N and ן—N and ן—ן and
 “ Y—ן and Y.—And, that the following
 “ letters produced as *not at all similar in*
 “ *the Samaritan*, are very similar?—such
 “ as א and א — ק and ק.”

With respect to the former, I agree with him, they are not similar; but then, candour required, that he should have produced the other instances given by Hottinger of letters that are very similar in the *Hebrew*—so much so indeed, that to the first glance of the Eye, they appear the same—viz. ן and ן—ן and ן—ן and י &c. And, as to the *Samaritan* letters, which the Dr. has selected as very similar, I must declare, they do not appear so to me, nor will they, I believe, to many others.

Q 2

But,

But, even admitting some similitude in these, why did not the learned Doctor produce the instances, that Hottinger has given, of other Samaritan letters that *are not at all similar*—as *𐤌 yod* and *𐤎 vau*—*𐤏 resh* and *𐤐 caph*? This omission I can no other way account for, than by that strong partiality to the *Samar. Pent.* which he has manifested on every occasion.

His 3d objection is, that “ Hottinger
 “ has exhibited many words as corrupted
 “ —when many of the very instances,
 “ thus given as corruptions, are not to
 “ be found in *any one* English or French
 “ Samar. MS. though *England* can boast
 “ of seven, and *France* of four.”—And
 that “ in the warmth of his zeal to enu-
 “ merate a multitude of instances, he has
 “ produced some confessedly inconclu-
 “ five.” *Dissert. ii. vol. p. 135, 138.*

But, granting all this, does it not fol-
 low, that *some* of the *many* instances given

as corruptions are found in those very MSS.—and that, in the multitude produced, *some* are conclusive? Hottinger's point was to prove that the Samaritan Transcriber was deceived by the similar shape of the Hebrew Letters; and that this was really the case will appear evident from the following instances, which Dr. K. has not thought proper to take notice of among his quotations from this author.

Thus, by a mistake of the letters ה and ח in Gen. vii. 19. The Hebrew word—הגבהים *baggebobim*, *high* (mountains,) is in the Samaritan הגבוים *baggebochim*, *bald*, which has no connexion with the prevalence there mentioned of the overwhelming flood.

Thus too, in Exod. xiv. 24. it is said of God in the Heb. ויחם *wayeham*, he *troubled* or *dismayed* (the Egyptians), but
in

in the Samaritan וַיַּחֲמֵם *wayecham*, that he *warmed* them, which is absurd.

Thus also, by a mistake of the letters ך and ר, what in Gen. xiv. 14. is said of Abraham in the Hebrew וַיַּרְקֵם *wayarek*—he *armed* his servants, or (literally) made them draw the sword; is, in the three Samaritan copies which Hottinger examined, read וַיַּדְקֵם *wayadek*—he *bruised* or consumed them—an interpretation, says he, that would require an *Oedipus* to apply.

Take another example from the letter י and י, in Lev. vi. 10. The priest is said in the Hebrew to put on מִדּוֹ *middo*, *his garment*, which the Samaritan Translator has rendered מִדִּי *middi*, *my garment* *.

Walton takes notice of a corruption in the Samaritan copy, arising from a mistake in the same Letters;—Yod (י) in
the

* Hottinger's Exercit. Anti-Morinianæ, p. 45. &c.

the Hebrew word יְשׁוּבָה *yeshballem*, (Ex. xxii. 1 r.) being written vau (ו) in the Samaritan: This he informs us (Proleg. 12.) was discovered by William Eyres, a prebendary of Ely, and communicated by him in a letter to Usher: But, it is unnecessary to multiply examples of this sort: The few I have selected are, in my humble opinion, sufficient to prove that the Samaritan Pentateuch is but a version from the Hebrew: This is Hottinger's inference, which he extends much farther in these decided words: " Hinc elucet, " quod sine omni dubio, Samaritani ex " Judaico suum Pentateuchum descrip- " serint: id autem, ex quo quid primo " describitur, necessario & antiquius esse " debet, et ab erroribus emendatius."

But, in order to weaken the force of this conclusion, Dr. Kennicott proceeds to question the authority of the manuscript from which it is deduced; with what candour

candour or consistency the following particulars will enable us to determine.

Hottinger speaks of three Samaritan copies which he compared, "*tria exemplaria Samaritica quæ inspexi legunt,*" &c. Two of these, it seems, had a great conformity with respect to the corruptions they contained; "*ex illarum collatione vidi constantiam utriusque in eo quod vel non, vel sæpissime male, Hebraicè et scriberent et loquerentur;*" he, therefore, gives us a particular account of these in his preface, telling us, that one belonged to Golius a professor of Arabic at Leyden, which he read over three times, and the other, which he collated with it, was sent by Archbishop Usher to Lud. De Dieu; but, because he was not so particular with respect to the third copy, Dr. Kennicott takes no notice of it in his text, barely mentioning it in a note, and thus, in effect, reducing Hottinger's three
copies

copies to two—even on these the remarks he has made tend evidently to derogate from their authority, and destroy their credit upon no better foundation than his own conjectures.

That I may not be suspected of misrepresentation, I shall quote his own words:

“ It seems somewhat difficult to believe
 “ that this Usserian manuscript should
 “ really agree with the Leyden manu-
 “ script in such a variety of strange cor-
 “ ruptions, with so much *constancy*, unless
 “ one had been copied from the other, or
 “ both from the same faulty exemplar.—
 “ In short, if Hottinger’s two copies did
 “ uniformly contain the many corruptions
 “ imputed to them, ’tis allowed (conti-
 “ nues he,) they were bad copies; but
 “ this by no means affects the authority
 “ of the Samaritan Pentateuch, in gene-
 “ ral; because *there are so many other co-
 “ pies free from such corruptions.*” Diff.
 vol. ii. p. 142, 143.

R

Here

Here the learned Doctor seems to forget, that in his account of the controversy concerning Gerizim and Ebal, the authority of two or three versions of the same Pentateuch, reading *Gerizim* instead of *Ebal*, were, in his opinion, sufficient to oppose to the authority of all the Hebrew versions that read *Ebal* instead of *Gerizim*; concluding (without any regard to the superiority of number) that “no certain argument, or rather no argument at all, can be drawn from hence to fix the corruption on either side.” Diff. v. ii. p. 32. So that his reasoning is briefly this;—three copies, imputing corruptions to the Samaritan Pentateuch, cannot affect its authority, against a superior number that are free from these corruptions; but three copies, supporting its authority, are sufficient to counteract a superior number that would destroy it.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

The Septuagint Version made, not from a Samaritan, but a Jewish Copy—a proof from Gen. iii. 17—and from Matt. v. 8. —Samaritan Characters—uncertainty of their Origin—Palmyrene Inscriptions—Coins dug up in Judea—Arguments drawn from them chimerical—Hebrew final Letters.

THE preceding remarks on Dr. Kennicott's mode of reasoning are not meant to detract from whatever merit is due to his favourite Pentateuch, which I look upon as an ancient and venerable version from an Hebrew copy; but, more than this we are not warranted to allow: Were it of that *high antiquity* ascribed to it, and *in its character the most ancient*, why, it may be asked, did not the Greek Inter-

preters take their Septuagint from it? This celebrated translation, which Dr. Kennicott himself has highly praised for the assistance it contributes "toward correcting errors in the present Hebrew text" has been made—not from a Samaritan, but a Jewish copy, as is evident from several instances in which it differs from the latter—instances, that could only arise from letters easily mistaken in the Hebrew, but not in the Samaritan.

Among these, Genesis supplies us with one, that is very remarkable in 3 ch. 17 v. where we read in the Hebrew "curfed is the ground *for thy sake*," but in the Septuagint "curfed is the ground *when thou tillest it*,"—the difference evidently arising from a mistake of ר *resh* for ד *dalet*, in the word בעבורך *bababureka*, which the Interpreters must have read בעבורך *bababodeka*. (εἰς ἀργαίς, &c.)

Should

Should the learned reader require other instances of this nature, I refer him to Hottinger's Exercitations against Morinus, p. 53, &c. to be convinced that the Septuagint was taken from a copy in the present Hebrew character; and, as the Translators lived within 150 years of the time when Ezra's canon of the Old Testament was published*, *that* copy must have been a *genuine* one—or, at least, what they believed to be *genuine*, and surely, they were better judges of this matter than any other writers since their time.

If it be said, they were Jews, who would naturally prefer a *Jewish* to a *Samaritan* copy, even though they believed the latter to be of greater excellence and antiquity; I reply, that surely our Saviour cannot be suspected of any prepossession of this sort; his parable of the good Samaritan—his
 conversation

* Ezra's canon is supposed to have been published about 444 years before Christ.

conversation with the woman of Samaria, and other instances of the like nature, sufficiently exempt him from such a suspicion; yet he, and his Apostles, made use of the Septuagint, and sometimes the Hebrew “where the Hebrew was expressed “properly in the Greek version, (says Dr. Kennicott,) they used (the words of “that version, and where that version “was not proper, they translated for “themselves.” Dissert. vol. ii. p. 347.

But it does not appear, that our Saviour ever used the Samaritan copy of the Law, or even alluded to it, as he has to the Jewish, in the following passage recorded by St. Matthew (v. ch. 8. v.) “verily I say
 “unto you, ’till Heaven and Earth pass
 “away, one Jot or one Tittle—(that is
 “one small Letter, or curl of a Letter *,)
 “shall

* See Lightfoot’s *Horæ Hebraicæ* in Evan. Mat. cap. v. v. 18.—*Μία κεφαλαία*.

“ shall in no wise pass from the Law ’till
“ all be fulfilled.”

Though this be a proverbial expression, intimating the permanency of the precepts of the Law, yet, it plainly alludes to its writing and letters; and as the *וַיָּא* or (י) *yod* is the least of the Hebrew letters, the expression could have no respect to the Samaritan copy of the Law, in which language it is not the least letter, but (מ) a large one.

They, who would trace this copy beyond the time of Ezra, should shew, why some of the historical books were not also produced in the same character; for these, and the books of Solomon, must have been in the possession of the ten tribes, when they separated from the other two; this separation having arisen—not from religious but political considerations* :

Why

The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin adhered to the
house.

Why then did not the Samaritans, when they succeeded the ten tribes, possess themselves of these books as well as of the Pentateuch?—Will it be said, they were carried off by the Israelites, and dispersed with them in different parts of the world? Then must it seem very extraordinary, that not one of these books should have ever since been recovered, except the Pentateuch alone, and even this was not known, nor heard of in these countries, until about 200 years ago, when, at the suggestion of Scaliger, Archbishop Usher, and other patrons of learning, ordered copies to be sought and purchased at Neapolis or Naples, and other places, among the Descendants of the Samaritans; yet, notwithstanding the most diligent

house of David, when the other ten revolted from Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and chose Jeroboam for their king: Hence the division of the kingdom into two parts, known by the names of the kingdom of *Judah* and *Israel*, which happened about 120 years after its first establishment.

gent enquiry, no other manuscripts could be found but those of the Pentateuch which Peter a Valle and others brought with them into Europe*: May we not then fairly conclude upon the whole, that the Samaritans had no copy of the Law before the time of Ezra, and that their Pentateuch was taken from one of his copies by Manasseh in the manner already mentioned? Why the whole code was not taken is easily accounted for:—The animosity that arose between them and the Jews, immediately after the return from the Babylonish Captivity—the rivalry between their places of worship—Gerizim and Jerusalem—the celebrity of the latter, as recorded in the Historical and Prophetical books of Scripture—and the praises of Mount Sion, so often mentioned in the Psalms—these, and other considerations,

S reproaching

* Prid. Conn. part I. b. vi. p. 417, &c.

reproaching their present schismatical and former corrupt worship, necessarily prevented the adoption of such books; and, indeed, the Samaritans could not, with any degree of propriety, receive them, without renouncing, at the same time, their ambition and resentment.

As to the characters, or letters, in which the Samaritan Pentateuch is written, their origin cannot be so easily traced; the probability is, they were the same as those used in the *Syrian* or Chaldean Provinces, from which the Cutheans and other colonies were transplanted into Samaria—that is, the old Phœnician or Canaanitish characters, as is generally supposed: The letter written by the Samaritans to Artaxerxes king of Persia, as mentioned in *Ezra*, iv. 7. “was written in the Syrian tongue;” which shews that they used this language above 250 years after they came to Samaria; but, what dialect of it
—whether

—whether the Aramæan, or that used in outer Syria—that of Palestine, or inner Syria — or the Nabathean used in the mountainous parts of Assyria, and the villages of Erac or Babylonia, is uncertain; Gill supposes it to be the last*: This diversity of dialects is a proof of the many changes, which the ancient Syriac or Chaldee has undergone—changes that are confirmed, both as to language and letters, by the celebrated Palmyrene inscriptions—particularly those published by Gruter, from which two Alphabetical tables were formed by Mr. Swinton: In these tables most of the letters have, each, a variety of different forms, and many of them a form so like that of others, as renders it difficult to distinguish them, or to frame any rational conjecture of their antiquity †: Mr. Swinton supposes them to

S 2

be

* Differ. p. 131.

† Philos. Transac. vol. 48. p. 693 and 740.

be be the ancient Chaldee, the use of which prevailed at Tadmor and all the neighbouring parts of Syria, so late as the first, second, and third centuries after Christ: Dr. Kennicott considers them as in a sort of middle state between the Samaritan and the Hebrew*—Sealiger as unknown letters—Gruter supposes they are Arabic—Cardinal Neris and Hyde confound them with the Phœnician; but, the learned Abbe Barthelemy, who mentions this diversity of opinions, and who has himself formed more accurate Alphabets from the same Palmyrene inscriptions, thinks they are all in the Syriac or Chaldee; “ nous connoissons (says
 “ he) l’alphabet Palmyrenien, et nous
 “ savons qu’il est composé de vingt-deux
 “ élémens, ainsi que l’avoit observé St.
 “ Epiphane, dans son Traité contre les
 “ hérésies. Le même auteur paroît per-
 “ suadé que la langue de Palmyre ne dif-
 feroit

* Differ. vol. II. p. 155.

“ feroit pas du Syriaque ; & Reland, que
 “ á connu ce passage, en rapporte un au-
 “ tre de Theoderet, où il est dit que
 “ cette langue étoit en usage aux envi-
 “ rons de l’ Euphrate. Ces témoignages
 “ réunis sont confirmés par les Inscriptions
 “ que nous avons entre les mains, &
 “ qui sont toutes en Syriaque ou Chal-
 “ déen*.”

The difference observable between these
 Palmyrene characters, and the still greater
 difference between *them* and the usual
 Syriac characters, in which the versions of
 the Old and New Testament are written†,
 should teach us, not to lay much stress
 upon arguments drawn from inscriptions,
 in

* L’ Academie des Inscriptions, tom xxvi. p. 588.

† These are of a late date, having been introduced by
 the Christians of Antioch, who, in imitation of Daniel and
 Ezra, had used the Hebrew square characters, but after-
 wards changed them for those now in use, because they
 would have nothing in common with the Nazarenes or Ebion-
 ites. Walton’s Proleg. 13—7.

in favour of the origin or priority of any language or character whatever.

Yet, the inscription on certain coins, said to have been dug up in Judea, is the main argument made use of by Prideaux, Walton and others, to prove the Samaritan to be the true old Hebrew or original character of the East: The words inscribed on these coins are "Jerusalem the holy and the Shekel of Israel." The letters, it is presumed, are the Samaritan; and, as it cannot be supposed that the Samaritans would have paid this compliment to Jerusalem, with which they had nothing to do, since the return of the Jews from captivity, it is hence inferred, that these coins must have been struck by the Jews, either before the Captivity, or before the separation of the ten tribes; consequently, that the Samaritan letters, supposed to be the same with those on the coins, were the ancient Hebrew characters,

acters, in which the books of the Old Testament were originally written.

But, the learned are now generally agreed, that these coins are spurious—that, admitting them to be genuine, the letters are not the same with those of the Samaritan Pentateuch, as appears from the plates given us of these coins—that, supposing them the same, nothing could thence be concluded in favour of so remote an antiquity as they are intended to prove; for the oldest of these coins, as the dates on them shew, do not precede the settlement of the high priesthood in the Asmonean family*, which happened above 300 years after the return of the Jews from captivity, or about 150 years before Christ. “This single observation,” as the authors of the Universal History have

* See Bayer's plates of these coins, the oldest of which he refers to Simon Maccabeus of the Asmonean family. ch. ii. p. 62, &c.

have remarked*, “ renders all arguments
 “ drawn from these shakels perfectly chi-
 “ merical.”

Inscriptions of this nature, however,
 serve to shew the variations which many
 of the ancient oriental characters have
 undergone: These variations have been
 ascribed to the diversity of dialects, occa-
 sioned by the confusion at Babel; “ neque
 “ *literarum figuræ* (says Hermannus
 “ Hugo,) ante cæperunt esse diversæ
 “ quam diversitas *Idiomatum* nata est in
 “ confusione Babel; nunquam enim le-
 “ gimus unius alicujus linguæ aut gentis
 “ literas fuisse diversas, nisi forte capitales
 “ seu initiales, medias et finales ut apud
 “ Arabes; vel solas initiales et finales ut
 “ apud Hebræos; vel solas capitales ut apud
 “ Latinos; aut certe, quando gens aliqua
 “ in alterius venit potestatem, a quâ cum
 “ legibus

* See 16th vol. b. iii. 37th. ch. and the authors there
 quoted, p. 652.

“ legibus etiam literas acceperit” P. 42,
&c.

As to the five Letters here alluded to, which, at the end of words, assume another form in the Hebrew, and are therefore called *Finals*, they affect not in the least the question before us; this will appear from the account given us by Dr. Kennicott of their origin and use. “ It
“ is well known (says he,) that the 22
“ Hebrew Letters express numbers as
“ far as 400, and that the 5 remaining
“ hundreds (under one thousand) are expressed by *different forms*,—and, as
“ they are not in the least wanted to express words, and yet are used in the
“ Bible, so, may we conclude, they were
“ first introduced into the Bible, for the
“ purpose of numbers: This is the use
“ made of them by the Jews in their own
“ writings.” Kenn. Differ. ii. vol. p.
“ 209.

C H A P. VII.

The supposed change of Letters by Ezra unfounded—Credulity of St. Jerome—the Autograph of Moses—not the only book of the Law preserved by the Jews during their Captivity—Argument from Targums answered—no two fold Character in use among the Jews—Bruce's Argument in favour of the Ethiopic—does not affect the Antiquity of the Hebrew—the Hebrew Alphabet the original or parent Alphabet—summary of the foregoing arguments—collectively taken they demonstrate the originality and purity of the Biblical Hebrew—an objection from the points.

BUT, objections to the present Hebrew Letters have not been confined, merely, to a deviation from their original form;
another,

another, of a more general nature, has been also urged against their antiquity; for it has been said, that Ezra and his companions of the Great Synagogue, when they formed a canon of the sacred books, had changed the old Hebrew characters for the Chaldean, or square ones, as better known to the Jews who lived so long at Babylon: Resentment is also supposed to have had some share in this change, as they did not choose to make use of the same characters with the Samaritans, who had opposed the rebuilding of the Temple, and with whom they resolved to have no future intercourse: Hence it has been inferred, that the Samaritans have retained the old Hebrew characters, thus relinquished by Ezra, for the Square ones now in use.

In answer to this, it may be asked, in the first place—how does it appear that the square character was the Chaldean in

the time of Ezra and the captivity?—is it not much more probable, that the Samaritan was the Chaldean, (or, making some allowance for the effects of time, that it nearly resembled it), inasmuch as the Samaritans were a colony of the Chaldeans, as has been already shewn: Besides, it deserves consideration, that Daniel the Jew was a captive at this time, and wrote in the square character, if it be allowed that he wrote his own Prophecies, which are handed down to us in this character; and he it was who read the *hand-writing* on the wall that terrified Belshazzar: (Dan. ch. v.) This writing was not in the Chaldee characters, or those used in Chaldea or Babylon, for the Chaldeans could not read them; but, as Daniel, who was in Babylon at this time, read and interpreted them, it is evident they must have been those to which he had been accustomed before he came

came to Babylon—that is, the Hebrew square character.

This supposed change of Letters by Ezra has been confidently asserted by St. Jerome *, and disproved by several of our ablest Hebreans and Rabbiniſts, who have ſhewn it to be founded on a Tradition of the Jews—“ and *that* (ſays Doctor Gill) “ far from being generally received by “ them.” Lightfoot, in his *Horæ Hebricæ*, has ſtated under the article *מִצָּה* *מִצָּה*, on Math. v. 18. the Rabbinical arguments in ſupport of this change, and expoſed their weakneſs, as being built upon tradition; and Hottinger condemns the credulity of Jerome for having ſo eaſily adopted it, in theſe words “ ex- “ iſſimo igitur Hieronymum, quæcunque “ de

* Præfat. Hieronymi de omnibus Libris Vet. Teſt.—vide Hieron. opera ſtudio Monachorum Sti. Bendeſti. E. Congreg. Sancti Mauri.

“ de Samaritanorum literis tradit et libris,
 “ ex *auditione* tantum, et incautâ aliorum,
 “ Judæorum præsertim, a quibus non
 “ rarò veris admixta accepit falsa, per-
 “ suasione haufisse, ac proinde ejus hac
 “ de re testimonia ad veritatis et antiqui-
 “ tatis canonem examinanda *.”

If we would examine the matter, as this author has here justly remarked,—not by *hearsay* evidence, but the standard of truth and antiquity, let us appeal to those authors who are the best qualified, and the most likely to give us information on so remarkable a transaction: Of this description are Philo and Josephus:—Have they given us any information of a change of Letters by Ezra?—not the least; on the contrary, they boast of the invariableness of their sacred writings, and the stability of their Law* :—Has

Ezra

* Exercit. Anti. Morin. de Pentateucho Samar. Seq. 28. p. 53.

† Philo de vitâ Mosis. l. 2. p. 656.—Joseph. contra Apion. l. 1. Sec. 8.

Ezra himself or any of the Prophets?—not the least, though they relate matters of much less consequence:—Is it probable that Ezra would have attempted so great an innovation—or if he attempted it, he would be able to succeed?—let these questions be answered by the prohibition respecting any alteration in their Law, (Deut. iv. 2;) and the guilt and meanness that must necessarily follow, should they forsake their own sacred character, to adopt that of their enemies.

Such are the strong, and, as they appear to me, irrefragable arguments against the change of letters imputed to Ezra; others, however, of an opposite tendency, have been advanced, which it may be proper to take notice of: It has, in the first place, been asserted, that a long residence in Chaldea had so far precluded the use of the Hebrew Letters, that they were generally forgot and superseded of necessity

necessity by those of Chaldea: To this I reply, that the Jews, who remembered the first Temple, and wept on their return (Ezra iii. 12.) at laying the foundation of the second, could not be supposed to have forgotten their language or letters, the greater part of them having been only 52 years there*; or admitting that the vulgar Jews had forgotten both, the better sort retained them, and not only spoke but wrote the Hebrew after their return; for certain it is, that the Prophets Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi wrote it in its purity, preserving the same Roots, Idioms and Terminations, as are in the Pentateuch of Moses; and it is no less certain, that some of the Psalms,

as

* The 70 years captivity, which Jeremiah predicted as the period of its duration, are to be reckoned from the 4th of Jehoiakim's reign, which corresponds with the 1st of Nebuchadnezzar's—18 years before the Temple was destroyed and the Jews carried into captivity.

as the 126th and 137th were written in Hebrew, after the return from the Babylonish captivity.

It has been also asserted, that not only the language was forgotten, but that the sacred books themselves had been burnt with the temple, and restored by Divine Inspiration—an assertion, that scarce deserves a serious answer, being founded on a passage in the Apocryphal book of Esdras (2 b. xiv. 21.)—a book of very little authority, and, in this instance, clearly refuted by Nehemiah, who relates (ch. viii. v. 2.) that Ezra read the book of the Law publicly before the people after their return.

Indeed, in the corrupt and idolatrous reigns of the kings of Judah, the sacred books are supposed to have been much neglected, and, perhaps, carelessly kept; at least it appears that in the time of Josiah, Hilkiah the priest found, at the

U cleansing

cleansing of the temple*, a book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses, or, as it is in the Hebrew, *by the hand*—that is, according to Dr. Kennicott, *in the handwriting of Moses*. “ For, (says he,) though
 “ there are fifteen places in the Old Testament, which mention the words—
 “ *Law of Moses* and *book of Moses*, yet
 “ this one place only mentions *the book of*
 “ *the Law in the hand* (or by the hand) of
 “ *Moses*; the reason of which seems to
 “ be, that the other places speak of that
 “ Law *in general*, but this place speaks
 “ of *one particular Manuscript*, namely the
 “ original.”

As to the point of age, he adds, “ This
 “ Manuscript certainly might be *the ori-*
 “ *ginal*, for the most extended chrono-
 “ logy does not make the interval, from
 “ the

* See 2d book of Chron. xxxiv. 14.—2d book of Kings, xxii. 8—11.—Prid. Connec. part I. b. i. p. 45. before Christ 623 years.

“ the death of Moses to the death of Joshua, 950 years—an age exceeded by that of several Manuscripts preserved at this day.” Kenn. Differ. vol. ii. p. 131—229.

It is highly probable then, that this was the very *autograph*, or original manuscript of Moses; but, it by no means follows, that this was the only book of the Law then extant; for every King was obliged to copy it on his accession to the throne, and every *civil*, as well as *religious* regulation, was founded on it. Deut. xvii. 18, 19.

These considerations lead us to conclude, that several authentic copies of the Law—perhaps this very autograph itself, were preserved during the Captivity: Daniel refers to the Law, as then existing, (ch. ix. v. 11—13.) and, if the sacred vessels of the temple were carefully preserved at Babylon, may we not reasonably suppose, that the authentic ma-

manuscript of the Hebrew Scriptures was also deposited there, and restored to Zerubabel, or Ezra, on their return to Jerusalem? certain it is, that wherever, or however preserved, Ezra produced the Law, and read it to the people, as I have already mentioned, immediately after their return.

But, it is argued, that the Chaldee Paraphrases called *Targums*, or translations of the Hebrew Scriptures into that language, are an evidence of the necessity of such a change of the letters, as they originated about this time, having been made, as is supposed, for the benefit of those Jews, who had forgotten the Hebrew after the Captivity.

To this it may be replied, that there is nothing in the Scriptures themselves to authorize this account of the origin or design of these *Targums* *, except a passage in

* The two most ancient and authentic are those of Onkelos on the Law, and of Jonathan on the Prophets.

in Nehemiah, which runs literally thus:
 “ And they read in the book in the Law
 “ of God distinctly, and they gave the
 “ sense, and caused them (the people) to
 “ understand in the reading;” (Nehem.
 ch. viii. v. 8.) that is, Ezra and the Le-
 vites, mentioned in the verse immediately
 preceding, explained the difficult places of
 Scripture, so as to adapt it to the under-
 standing of the common people, who stood
 by; but not a word here indicating a
 translation into Chaldee; for the word
 מפרש *mephorash*, in the original, does not
 mean translated, but *expounded*; there-
 fore, what is said seems, merely, to refer
 to instruction in the Law, which was too
 carefully kept to be lost, and too much
 revered to be forgotten. (Ex. xiii. 9—16.)

It has been also argued by those who
 would readily allow the *second* place in
 point of antiquity to the Hebrew Alpha-
 bet, provided that some favourite one of
 their

their own was honoured with the *first*, that the Jews had a *twofold* character, the one *sacred*, in which their Law was written, and the other adapted to *common* purposes: I cannot better illustrate this notion, and the use that has been made of it, than by quoting a passage on the subject, from a late writer, who, in his Travels to discover the source of the Nile *, affirms, that the first Alphabet was *Ethiopic*, and founded on Hieroglyphics, and that the common Ethiopic, or merchants writing, was the Hebrew sacred character, in which the copy of the Law was first written: This opinion he endeavours to support, on the authority of a passage in the 28th chapter of Genesis, relative to the command given by God to Moses, concerning the breast-plate of judgment, in these words: “ And the
“ stones

* Bruce, vol. ii. p. 59. of the Dublin 8vo, edition.



“ stones shall be with the names of the
 “ children of Israel—twelve according to
 “ their names, *like the engravings of a*
 “ *signet* ;” that is, says he, “ You shall
 “ not write in the way used ’till this day,
 “ for it leads the people into Idolatry;
 “ you shall not type Judah by a lion,
 “ Zebulon by a ship, Issachar by an ass
 “ couching between two burdens; but
 “ instead of writing by pictures, you shall
 “ take the other known hand—the mer-
 “ chants writing, which signifies sounds,
 “ not things; write the names Judah—
 “ Zebulon—Issachar, &c. in the letters,
 “ such as the merchants use upon their
 “ signets.”

But this interpretation, which favours
 the notion of a twofold character among
 the Jews, however ingenious, is inadmis-
 sible; for the meaning of the command,
 as Bishop Patrick has remarked, is ob-
 viously this, that the letters to be written
 on

on Aaron's breast-plate, *like the engravings of a signet*, should be *protuberant*, as they are upon coins, or upon wax impressed with a seal.

And in the same manner, when God commands his own great name to be engraven on the golden plate of the mitre, in these words, "Holiness to the Lord," it is to shew, that Aaron was separated to the service of the Most High, and, therefore, the letters, whatever they were, should be distinct and *prominent*; but, in neither case does there seem to be the least allusion to any other characters, different from those in which the Law was first written by the finger of God.

Our traveller's argument, then, is of no force to invalidate the high antiquity and priority of the present Hebrew Alphabet, which I have deduced from the significant structure of its letters, their names, number and order, as preserved in so many
parts

parts of Scripture; and which I have also endeavoured to establish, by answering objections, and refuting the arguments that have been urged in favour of the Samaritan, whose claim to a competition is now generally acknowledged to be superior to that of the Arabic, Ethiopic, or any other.

Its priority to the Alphabets of other ancient languages—as the Chaldee, Syriac, Arabic, &c. is allowed by most writers who have compared them *, and who, from their knowledge of the subject, were the best qualified to judge: In the Arabic Alphabet it has been supposed, that the shape of the letters was changed, and their order deranged, by the vanity of the Arabians, which prompted them to depart in these respects from the ori-

X

ginal,

* See Pentaglot Lexicon of Schindler—Harmonic Gram. and Lex. of Hottinger and Castet—and Hermannus Hugo de prima Scribendi origine, chap. v. p. 62. and chap. vii. p. 65, &c.

ginal, that their own language might be considered as independent on any other *: And to the same principle has been attributed their addition of certain letters, which the Hebrew Alphabet never knew: One circumstance, however, they could not conceal—viz. that the names of several of them are evidently from the Hebrew, as are most of the letters of the Greek Alphabet, from which the Romans † and other European nations took theirs.

From these observations, collectively considered, I venture to conclude, that the Hebrew Alphabet is the original or Parent Alphabet, and that this argument, united with the four former, is sufficient to demonstrate not only the priority, but the originality of the language itself: for, if it appear, from the *longevity* and the
names

* Gaffarellus's unheard-of Curios. ch. xiii. f. 6. Hermannus Hugo. ch. v. p. 42.

† Walton's 2d Proleg. 12th sec.

names of the Patriarchs, to have been the language used before the Flood—that it has been thence *continued* uniformly down to the time of Moses, who received the Law in it from God himself—that the *words* of it express fully and forcibly the nature of the things signified—that its *roots*, however precise and limited in number, are yet copious and connected in their meaning—and its very *letters* ideal and significant, then will it evidently follow, that the Hebrew, as we have it at this day in our Bibles, was the first and original language of mankind.

It only remains now to be considered, whether it has descended to us *pure* and uncorrupted: But, if what I have already remarked, on the permanent nature of the letters, be admitted, this part of my subject will require very little trouble to discuss.

It is obvious from experience, that the languages of men, who have a constant

X 2 intercourse

intercourse with foreigners, are continually changing; the importation of new customs always introducing new words adapted to express them: Hence the languages of Greece and Rome were augmented in proportion as their intercourse with other states was increased; whereas, the Hebrews, whose religious institutions secluded them, in a great measure, from the rest of the world, preserved their language in its purity; and, as this had been committed to writing before any other language, and a standard fixed for it by the five books of Moses in particular, which, immediately after their composition, were deposited in the ark (1 Kings, viii. 9. 2 Chron. v. 10.) and afterwards in the temple, it was, thus far, preserved with the most vigilant care, and secured from all those corrupt additions, which had altered and debased the other languages of antiquity.

That

That it suffered no change in passing from Moses to Malachi — through a space of more than a thousand or eleven hundred years*, may be inferred from the similitude of style observable in the several books of the Old Testament †, except a few that were written about the time of the Babylonish Captivity—such, for instance, as the Prophecies of Ezekiel and Daniel, written *within* this period; and the book of Ezra, which was written soon *after* it: Into the books of Ezekiel and

* According to Dr. Kennicott, the whole canon of the Hebrew Bible was closed by *Malachi*, the latest of the Jewish Prophets, about 50 years after Ezra's collection of the sacred books, composed before and during his time: And from Moses to Malachi, he remarks, are 1160 years (viz. from 1580 to 420 A. Ch.) but, according to Usher, there are but 1012. See Kennic. vol. ii. of *Differ.* p. 305. and his *General Differ.* p. 6.

† “ In veteri Testamento tanta est constantia, tanta convenientia in copulatione literarum & constructione vocum, ut fere quis putare posset, omnes illos libros eodem tempore, iisdem in locis, a diversis tamen auctoribus, esse conscriptos.” Leusd. *Philol. Heb.* p. 166. 4to.

and Ezra, particularly, we may perceive that the Chaldaic or Syriac has been introduced; such places, however, have been distinguished by Biblical editors, and may be easily accounted for—ex. gr. part of the 4th chapter of Ezra, from the 8th verse to the end—the whole 5th chapter—18 verses of the 6th—and from the 12th to the 27th verse of the 7th chapter, are written in this dialect: and the reason is obvious; for this part of his subject relating chiefly to letters and decrees written in the Chaldee, the sacred historian thought it proper to use the very words of the original, especially, as it was at this time familiar to the Jews, who had lately returned from captivity*.

The second chapter of *Daniel*, also, from the 4th verse to the end, and the succeeding chapters regularly to the end
of

* Prid. Conn. part I. b. iii. p. 129.

of the 7th, are written in the same dialect, as might naturally be expected from an author, who had so long resided in Chaldea, and who treated of many particulars of the history of that nation.

It is also remarkable, that the 11th verse of the 10th chapter of *Jeremiah* is written in Chaldee; for, as it contains a profession of the faith of the Jews, the prophet, who at the first of the Captivity held a correspondence with them by letters, thought it necessary to dictate to them the very words they should use to the Chaldeans, who would endeavour to entice them to idolatry—"Thus shall ye
 " say to them, The Gods that have not
 " made the heavens and the earth, they
 " shall perish," &c.

The other parts of the sacred volume leave no room for suspecting any change, either as to language or letters; for such of them as were written before the Captivity are in pure Hebrew, a few *Egyptian*

tian words in the Pentateuch excepted, which indicate, however, the affinity of both languages; as, for instance, אֲבֶרֶךְ, *abrec*, (Gen. xli. 43,) from the Hebrew הֲבֶרֶךְ, *habrec*, (*Infin. Hiph.*) to “bow the “knee” viz. to Joseph:— And צַפְנָת-פַּעֲנָה *Tzapbnath-Phaaneach*, the name given him by Pharaoh, (Gen. xli. 45,) when he ordered *that* high honour to be paid him: The first of these names comes, evidently, from the Hebrew צָפַן, *tzaphan*, to conceal; but, the origin of the latter is not agreed on—some deriving it from פָּעַן, *phaan*, considered as an *Arabic* word*, which signifies to *open*; while others will have it to be a *Coptic* †, signifying things *future*: But, Vitringa derives it from the Hebrew פָּנָה *phana*, to behold or contemplate ‡: Hence, one who contemplates things secret or *occult*, or, as others express

* *J. Clerici* Commen. in Gen. xli. 45.

† *Robertson*. Clavis Pent. in eundem locum.

‡ *Vitrin*. Observ. sac. l. 1. p. 73.

press it, *a revealer of secrets*, in allusion to Joseph's interpretation of dreams.

From these, and a few other such names mentioned by Moses, among which his *own* has not been forgotten, the affinity of the ancient Egyptian language to the Hebrew has been inferred*; and, as the latter, soon after the captivity, ceased to be universally spoken, and was rather a written than a living language, it was not liable to change, like the languages of other nations, which the interests of

Y commerce,

* This affinity is confirmed by other instances, still more striking; for the name of the country itself—מצרים, *Mitzraim*, is derived from מצור, *matzur*, a strong hold, or fortification; there being no place more indebted to nature for security than Egypt; and, it is remarkable, that from its division into *Upper* and *Lower*, the name is used in the dual number: The Nile too, its most celebrated river, is called נחל *Nachal* (Gen. xv. 18. and Num. xxxiv. 5.) which, in Hebrew, signifies a *stream*—a torrent, or valley, through which a torrent runs; and, if we may credit *Pomp. Mela* (l. iii. c. 16.) the reputed source of the Nile is, by the Ethiopians, called *Nuchal*, which confirms this derivation: Vitringa remarks, that in the Phœnician and Egyptian languages, it is called *Neel*—*Nel* or *Niel*, whence *Nudos*.

commerce, and the progress of arts and sciences have variously mixed and connected with each other: Besides, no grammar* having been made for the Hebrew for many years after Malachy, the last of the prophets who wrote in it, no alteration could have since taken place; for, as it is difficult to write accurately in a dead language, even with the help of a grammar, so is it impossible without one.

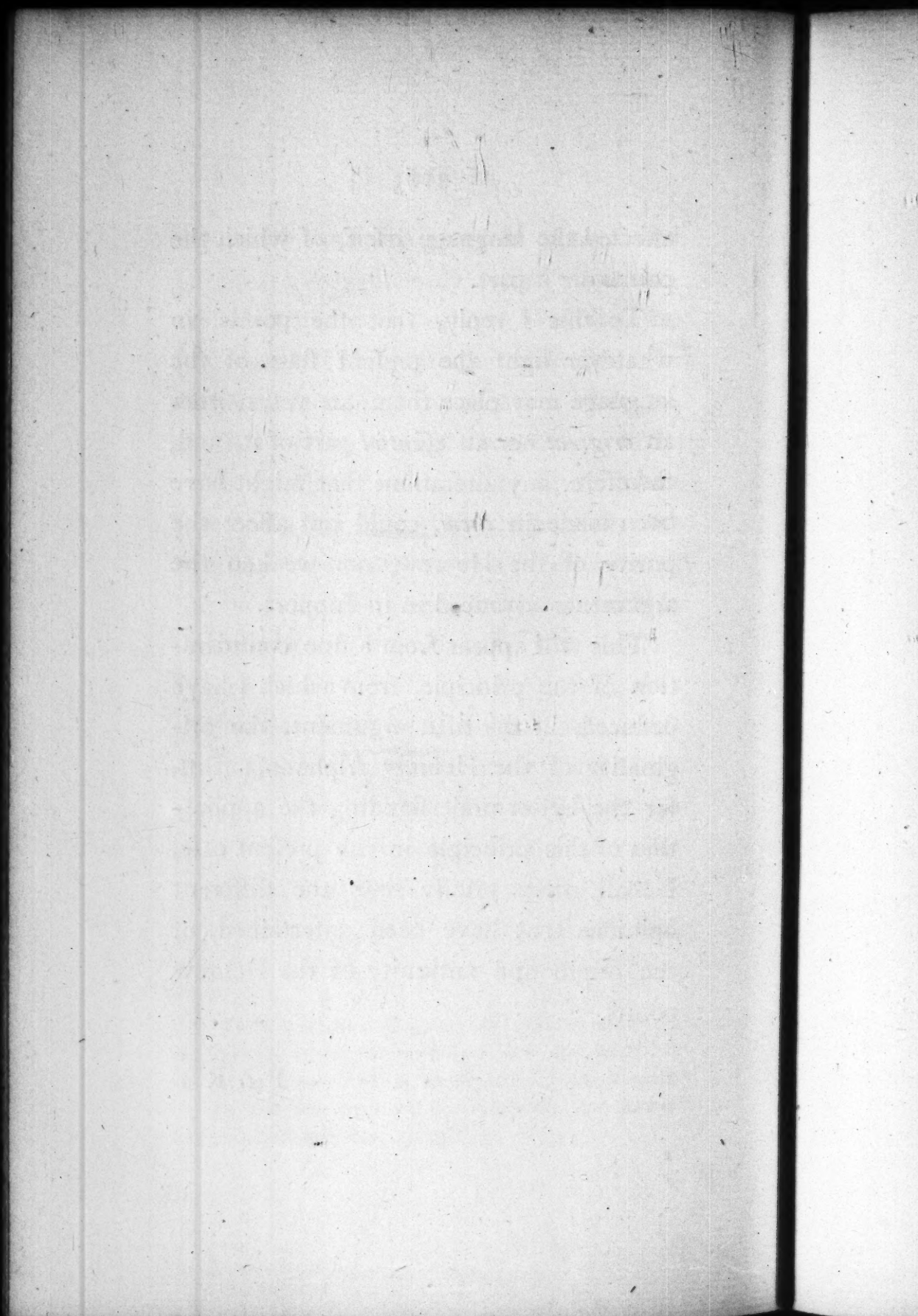
Here it may, perhaps, be objected, that the vowel points are subject to variation, and have probably undergone many changes, before they were brought to their present state of perfection; consequently, that these changes must have
affected

* The first Hebrew Grammar was written, about the year 900, by *Saadias*, surnamed *Gaon*, i. e. illustrious: He was master of the Jewish academy at *Sora*, near Babylon, and the first who translated the Pentateuch into Arabic. Kennicott's Gen. Dissert. p. 19.

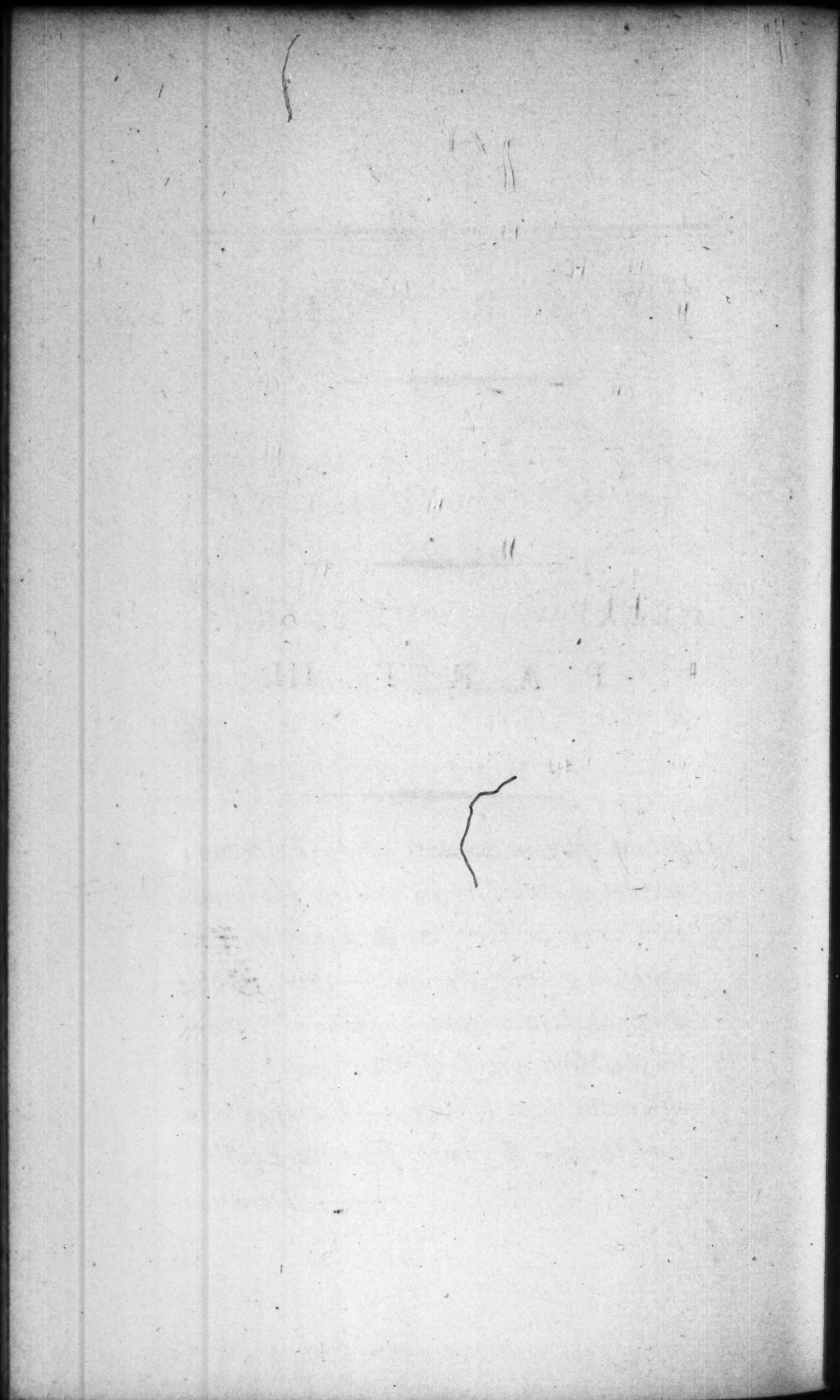
affected the language itself, of which the points are a part.

To this I reply, that the points, in whatever light the present state of the language may place them, are yet, neither an *original* nor an *essential* part of it, and, therefore, any alterations that might have been made in *them*, could not affect the purity of the Hebrew, nor weaken the arguments advanced in its support.

This will appear from a due consideration of the principle, from which I have deduced, in my fifth argument, the originality of the Hebrew Alphabet: But, for the better understanding the application of this principle in the present case, I shall, first, briefly state the different opinions that have been entertained, of the origin and antiquity of the Hebrew points.



P A R T III.



P A R T III.

ON THE
A N T I Q U I T Y
OF THE
HEBREW VOWEL POINTS.

C H A P. VIII.

Different opinions on this head—Prideaux's account of their Origin and Use—Unpointed Copies in the Jewish Synagogues no objection to their Antiquity—they probably originated in or after the time of Ezra—no decisive proof of their existence 'till after the time of Christ—Lightfoot's inconsistency—Argument from the Epistle of Demetrius

Demetrius to Ptolemy Philadelphus inconclusive—the Points no essential part of the Hebrew—nor necessary to its true reading while the Language was a living one.

THE learned have been long divided in their opinions, with respect to the origin of the Hebrew points, some ascribing them to *human*, and others to *divine* authority: Of the former class are they *, who attribute their invention to two eminent Jews—the one at Tiberias, called Ben Asher; the other at Babylon, called Ben-Naphtaly, who, about the year 1037, undertook to publish, each of them, a correct edition of the Hebrew Scriptures: But, as their disputes were about the points and accents, and the various readings, which these occasioned in the Bibles then extant, it is evident, as Walton has observed,

* Masceles and the Hutchinsonians—viz. Bates—Greg. Sharp—Parkhurst, &c.

observed, (Proleg. 8—sec. 12,) that they could not have disagreed about a matter of their own invention, and, consequently, that the points have been in use before their time.

Others* of the same class assert, that they were invented about the year of our Lord 500, by the Jews of Tiberias, who taking, as they say, all the Hebrew letters as consonants, placed the points under them, to direct the pronunciation, according to the true and received reading.

A controversy having arisen on this subject at the Reformation, when it was thought necessary to appeal, from traditions and translations, to the original Scriptures, the Papists, with a view of compelling the Protestants to return to the authority of the church, patronized the opinion of *Elias Levita*—an eminent gram-

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marian

* *Elias Levita*—*Cappellus*—*Wahon*—*Simonius*, &c.

marian among the Jews, and the first who called the antiquity of the points in question.

The Protestants, on the other hand, endeavoured to establish the authority of the points, with *Buxtorf* at their head, who was a professor at Basil, and well versed in the learned languages: This eminent grammarian, and his son, wrote—both of them in defence of the points, and in support of their opinion, produced some cabalistical books of great antiquity—as the book of בְּהִיר *Bahir*, said to have been written a little before our Saviour's time, and the book of צֹהַר *Zohar*, about a century after, in which there was an express mention of the points*.

These were opposed by Cappellus, who, in his *Punctuationis Arcanum*, supported the opinion of Levita, as did Walton, Simonius,

* Univ. Hist. 3 vol. 8vo. p. 455.

monius, and others, who held with Cappel-
 lus, that the true reading was pre-
 served, by means of the letters *עבוי ebevi*,
 to the times of the Jews of Tiberias, about
 the close of the 5th century.

Others * have referred them to a period
 of time about 1000 years earlier, and
 think they were invented or revived by
 Ezra, soon after the return of the Jews
 from the Babylonish captivity, when they
 became necessary, as the Hebrew then
 became a dead language.

The supposed inventors after the time
 of Ezra, are called *Masorites*, and their
 work *Masora*, from the Hebrew word *מסר*
masar, tradidit, because, after this language
 ceased to be a living one, and was to be
 learned from books only, these Masorites
delivered down, from age to age, their
 points, pauses and accents, and the man-

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ner,

ner how they were to be written and read.

But they, who will not allow them the honour of this invention, assign a different reason for the name, and ask—what have the Masorites done, except transmitting, from age to age, the *various readings*, which they had observed, by comparing the different copies that lay before them? These different readings are confined to the margin of the commonly-received copy, or that which they esteemed the most authentic, and are called קרי *keri*, the *read*, to distinguish it from the word כתב *ketib*, the *written*—not as implying any command to read so or so; for it is not the imperative קרי, but the same with קריי *karui*, something read, or with קריא *keriah*, a reading, i. e. a various reading, which others might make what use of they pleased: From these various readings, thus collected and handed down to posterity,

posterity, say they *, and not from the invention of the points, it was, that they obtained the name of Masorites.

The advocates for the *divine* original of the points suppose, and it is the common opinion of the Jews, that the points and accents were delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, as to the power of pronouncing, or *reading*, but not as marks or *figures* in writing, and from him were handed down, by *oral* tradition, to the time of Ezra, who revived and added them to the Pentateuch; and that, therefore, to keep in mind this wonderful circumstance, the Jews have always an unpointed copy in their synagogues.

Other advocates for their high antiquity believe they were ab *origine*, and given by God to Adam, together with the letters; or, at least, that they were coeval with

* See Dr. Gill's preface to his *Differ.* concerning the antiquity of the Hebrew language, &c.

with the letters, and in use as soon as they : This last opinion is supported by very learned writers* — particularly by Dr. Robertson, who declares against the notion of the Masorites having been the inventors, from the universal *silence* of the Jews, and of their historians, concerning such a memorable invention—from the *disagreement* among its advocates, as to the time, the place, and the authors of it—from the accuracy with which the Jewish writers have recorded the labours of their learned men, for several centuries after Christ—particularly the rise and progress of both the Talmuds, without taking the least notice of the Masoretic invention of the points—a work of much greater importance, as ultimately affecting the sacred Scriptures, and the true manner of reading them.

From

* Schultens's Heb. Gram. p. 50. Hottinger's Thesaurus Philol. p. 403.—Lightfoot, vol. 2. p. 1014.—Gill, p. 272, &c.—Robertson de gen. antiq. Punc. Voc. p. 101, &c.

From these, and other arguments, quoted from Buxtorf, Leusden, &c. he concludes, that the Hebrew language had always vowel points, however their number and figure might have varied in different ages, and proves, that the letters םןן *ebevi* or *matres lectionis*, as they are called, were never vowels in the Hebrew or its dialects, as the opposers of the antiquity of the points have asserted.

Certain it is, that many hundred words* occur in the Bible, in which none of the letters םןן are to be found, and scarce any, in which some of the syllables are not without them: "How then," says Dr. Prideaux, "can these supply the place of vowels, and every where assist the reading, since every where they are not to be found?"

The

* Six hundred, according to Dr. Robertson. See his Heb. Gram. p. 13.

The account, which this judicious writer gives us, of the origin, and antiquity of the points, is, in substance, as follows: That when the difuse of the Hebrew language, about the time of Ezra, or a little after, made it necessary that it should be read occasionally in the original, and interpreted in the Chaldee, the Law was divided into sections, and the sections into verses, as a direction, both to the reader and interpreter, when to make a stop—that the like necessity introduced, about the same time, the vowel-points, accents* and pauses—that no more were
at

* Thus, the Greeks, when their language became a dead one, “ found out *accents*, *spirits* and several other marks, to help those who were to learn it:—And so, also, are there “ in Latin several such marks—as that over the (ò) and (è) “ at the end of adverbs; and the mark over the (â) ab- “ lative to distinguish it from the (a) nominative, none of “ which marks were ever used while these languages were “ vulgarly spoken.” Prid. Conn. p. I. b. v. p. 357.

This truth of this observation, we have no reason to doubt: *Cappellus*, in his *Criticâ Sacrà*, quotes several authorities,

at first used, than necessity required, and that, as *three* served the Arabs, and *five* most other nations, they at first exceeded not this number—that the augmenting them to the present number proceeded from the over nicety of the *after* Masorites—that while confined to the Schools of the *first* Masorites, who only taught their Scholars the true reading of the Hebrew Scriptures, they were not regarded by their *Rabbies* or Doctors, which is the reason that no mention is made of them, either in the Talmud, or the writings of *Origen* or *Jerom*; but that, some time after the making of the Talmud *, (in what

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thorities, to shew, that the Books, anciently written in Greek, had no marks of this kind; and adds, that he himself saw, in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, in the year 1612, a Greek Testament without any *Accents* or *Spirits*.
 “ Novum Testamentum Græcum sine ullis Accentuum & Spirituum notis totum descriptum.”

Crit. Sac. L. 6. P. 397, 8.

* The Talmud of Jerusalem, supposed to have been finished about the year 230 or 300, or that of Babylon, which

year or age is uncertain,) the *punctuation* of the Masorites, having been judged, by the Jewish Doctors, to be as useful and necessary a way for preserving the Traditionary *Readings* of the Hebrew Scriptures, as the *Misna* and *Gemara* for preserving the Traditionary *Rites* and *Doctrines* of their Religion, was taken into their Divinity Schools; and that ever since, the Points have been held by the Jews of the same authority for *reading*, as the *Misna* * and *Gemara* for *interpreting*, and even as unalterable as the Letters themselves, for they reckon both of Divine original—only with this difference, that the Letters are written by the holy penmen

which was published about the year 500. These Talmuds are compilations of the Traditions of the Jewish Church, founded on a presumption, that Moses, besides the written book of the Law, had received from God, and delivered to Joshua, many obligations by oral conveyance only.

* The *Misna* is the Text of the Talmud, and the *Gemara*, the supplement or comment on it.

penmen themselves, but the Readings, as now marked, were delivered down from them *traditionally* by that Profession of men, who were hence called Masorites, and who probably continued, from the time of Ezra, to that of Ben-Asher and Ben-Nephtaly already mentioned*.

A copy of the law in the Jewish Synagogues, being without points, has been urged, as an argument, against so high an antiquity; but the chief reason assigned for such copies, is supposed to be this, that none but learned men, or, such as are well versed in the Hebrew Language, should be admitted readers in these sacred assemblies; for, if the copy was pointed, any ordinary person might read it—however, in other respects, illiterate and unqualified: It has been further said, that unpointed copies admit *various* senses, and

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* Prid. Conn. P. 1. B. 5. P. 359.

are, therefore, more favourable to the views of the cabalists and others, who interpret the Scriptures in the way of Allegory, than pointed copies, which determine the words to a single meaning: A third reason assigned for such copies is, that they may be *memorials* of the *oral* Tradition of the points, from the times of Moses to Ezra, who is supposed by the Jews to have *written* and added them to the Pentateuch, as already mentioned, (P. 173.)

As to the Antiquity of the Accents, it is unnecessary to make any particular observation, after what has been said of the Points: For, of both it has been remarked, that *there is no Syllable without a Point, and no word without an Accent*. And, as the Points are often changed, according to the position of the Accents, there must be a natural analogy, and connexion between

tween them, and, consequently, one must be as early as the other.

Such are the different opinions entertained of this part of our present Biblical Hebrew—opinions, that leave the origin of the points, almost, in the same obscurity with which that of the Letters is involved: Their use,—nay, the necessity of using them, in the present state of the Language, I freely admit; and though I believe, they originated in the time of Ezra, or soon after, yet I know not any circumstance, that *peremptorily* proves their existence prior to the time of Christ;—nay, I believe, it would be difficult to prove, that they were known, even in his time: Doctor Lightfoot, indeed, as an intimation to the contrary, has remarked that “ our Saviour, in his word of one
 “ *ισα*, and one small *κεραία*, not perish-
 “ ing from the Law, seems to allude to
 “ the least of the letters *Iod*, and the least
 “ vowel

“ vowel and Accent.” But *κεφαία* does not mean a vowel-point here, but the little head, or curl of a letter, that distinguishes it from another of a similar shape—as the *ך* from *ך*—*ב* from *ב*, &c. at least, the Doctor has himself given this explanation of it, in his Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations upon St. Matthew, where, under the Article *μία κεφαία*, he expressly says, that “ *it seems to denote* “ the little heads, or dashes of Letters, “ whereby the difference is made between “ Letters of a form almost alike*.”

Another passage has also been quoted from the Epistle of *Demetrius* to *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, concerning the famous Alexandrian Library, to prove the existence of the vowel-points at this period: In this Epistle, preserved by Eusebius*, he says,

* Lightfoot's Works, Fol. I. v. p. 1014. and II. v. P. 138.

† Præpar. Evangel. l. 8. c. iii. P. 351.

says, there remained still to be got, with a few others, the Books of the Jewish Law, contained or written in Hebrew Letters, and *φωνη*, by which Doctor *Gill* understands the vowel points, and asks (*Differ. P.* 246.) what else can be understood by *φωνη* as distinguished from Letters? But the learned Doctor appears to me to have mistaken the meaning of the word, in this place, as does *Vigerus*, in his Latin Translation, which runs thus; “desiderantur tamen cum paucis aliis, “Judaicæ Legis volumina, quod Hebraicis ea literis ac vocibus continentur.” Now, the latter sentence is thus expressed in the original, τυγχανει γαρ Εβραίοις γράμμασι κ, φωνη λεγομενα, where we may observe, that *φωνη* is in the singular number, and *γράμμασι* in the plural; the meaning, therefore, is evidently this, for they are contained (intimating the difficulty of getting them) in the Hebrew Characters

Characters and *Language*: Had it, indeed, been *φωναίς* in the plural number, like *γράμμασι*, with which it is connected, I should think the argument drawn from this passage would be unanswerable, and would prove the existence of the Hebrew points, in the time of Ptolemy, i. e. about 300 years before Christ.

However, it is of no great consequence to know, at what particular time they were invented, if it appear, that they are not coeval with the Letters, nor, consequently, an essential part of the Hebrew Scriptures: This I shall now proceed to demonstrate on the very same principle from which I have deduced the originality of the Alphabet.

I have already remarked, that every letter, in its first formation, had a proper and significant name, and, consequently, a distinct meaning; and, as such names were chosen as could best imprint the
shape

shape of each letter on the memory, from the resemblance it bore to the thing by which it was denominated, the proper sound could not be forgotten, nor, in its connexion with other letters, be mistaken, while the language was a living one—especially by those who had learned it from their infancy: Hence, one or more of the Hebrew letters might form as distinct a syllable at first, as they do now with the aid of the vowel points: *Spiritus intus alit*—that vital principle, to which the poet ascribes so much power, applies also to these letters, and accounts for their peculiar efficacy in this respect; accordingly, grammarians have very properly divided them—not into *consonants* and *vowels*, but into *radicals* and *serviles*, and agreeably to their formation by the organs of speech: The serviles, indeed, have a softer pronunciation than the radicals—particularly the letters אהוי *chevi*,

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which

which some regard as the original vowels of the language; but, it should be remembered, there are a multitude of words, in which none of them occur, as לבב דבר פקר מלך, &c. These it would be impossible to articulate, were the letters to be considered as mere consonants, like those of other languages*: But the principle I have mentioned, relative to the original signification of each, and to usage, while the language was a living one, sufficiently accounts for the true reading—not as determined by vowel-pronunciation, but propriety and sense: “It is this,” says Dr. Bayly †, “which makes the Hebrew
“ stand

* The truth of this remark may be more readily conceived, if we consider, for instance, how difficult, if not impossible, it is for us, to pronounce several of the German names, which we frequently meet with, from the number of consonants they contain, without more than, perhaps, a single intervening vowel to soften their asperity: Yet, they, who speak that language as their mother-tongue, find no difficulty in the pronunciation of such names.

† Preface to his Hebrew Grammar, p. 28.

“ stand distinguished from every other
 “ language in the world, and affords a
 “ self-evident proof, that Moses, the pro-
 “ phets and scribes wrote, not from tra-
 “ dition and common pronunciation, but
 “ by divine direction, which alone could
 “ preserve the Hebrew, notwithstanding
 “ some few Chaldaisms, various readings,
 “ and apparent irregularities, so amaz-
 “ ingly pure and uniform, from the time
 “ of Adam down to that of Malachy,
 “ amidst the confusion of tongues, the
 “ difference of dialects, and a seventy
 “ years captivity.”

Thus have I endeavoured to prove,
 from the *history*, *nature* and *principles* of
 the Hebrew language, and particularly its
 Alphabet, that it has unquestionable
 claims to originality and purity: And, as
 the connexion between the *matter* of the
 Hebrew Scriptures and the *language* that
 conveys it, is intimate, if not essential,

the authenticity of the latter must have considerable weight in establishing the authenticity of the former, and, consequently, in supporting the cause of Revelation and Religion.

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

*Application of the whole to the leading
Principle of Paine's Age of Reason—
Conclusion.*

A Writer of the present times, who has lately distinguished himself, by an attack on the Religion, as he had before, on the Civil Government of his Country, has, however, presumed to assert, that “ Human language, whether in speech or in print, cannot be the vehicle of the Word of God.” This proposition he founds on “ the want of an universal language—the mutability of language—the errors to which translations are subject—the possibility of totally suppressing such a word—the probability
“ of

“ of altering it, or of fabricating the whole, and imposing it on the world*.”

But the weakness of this foundation, on which he has reared his Deistical System, called the Age of Reason, for the purpose of overthrowing both the Old and New Testament, will soon appear, on applying the principles of the foregoing Essay: For human language, having been the gift of God to man, must be adequate to the end for which he gave it; consequently, it must be the proper means of communication from him to man, as it is, from one man to another: The *want of universality* is no objection in this case—it is nugatory, if the original language, in which the Word of God was revealed to us, be still in being; for though this language ceased at the Confusion to be universally spoken, for those wise reasons which

* Paine's Age of Reason, p. 16—55.

which a good and merciful God saw necessary in the then state of the world, yet its authenticity is not diminished on that account; the books of the Law were written in it, under the same Divine agency, that first enabled Adam to speak it—they were preserved in the ark—they were preserved in the temple—they were received and revered by all orders of the people, as of Divine origin—they were, with other books of Scripture extant in the time of Ezra, formed into a regular and authentic canon, from which versions were afterwards made into the Greek—Syriac and other languages of antiquity: To reject these, because none of the languages, in which they are conveyed to us, is an universal one, would be as unreasonable as to reject the Memorables of Xenophon, or the moral Precepts of Cicero, because the languages, in which they are written, are not distinguished by universality.

Nor

Nor less unreasonable is the objection of *mutability*, to which languages are liable : What critic in classical learning ever rejected the writings of an eminent Greek or Latin author, on account of the alterations these languages have undergone ? Are the *Iliad* and *Æneid* held in less estimation on this account, or, because the characters, in which they are now printed, differ from those in which they were first written ? perhaps, Mr. Paine expects, that the autographs or original Manuscripts of the several books of the Old and New Testament should have been preserved, as proofs of their authenticity : Since the invention of printing autographs are useless, and to expect their preservation until that period, would be to expect the interposition of a miracle ; a thousand years is considered as a great age for a Manuscript, and, perhaps, the oldest, that can be produced, is not prior to the sixth century.

Be

Be this as it may, the mutability of other languages applies not to the Hebrew, which has invariably preserved the characteristics of originality—especially in its letters, which are, in a peculiar manner, calculated for durability*: This I have already proved, and have only to add, that the art of expressing sounds by such characters, and the varied combina-

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tion

* I have already remarked, that the names of the Alphabetic letters are not arbitrary in the Hebrew, but significant: The same may be said of the names of many other things—as of animals, for instance, which have an imitative connexion of vocal sounds: Thus גור (*gur*) which signifies a savage *whelp*, is expressive of the growling of a beast of prey. גמל (*gimel*) a camel—ערג (*org*) a *stag*, have, each, a resemblance to the sound or voice of the animal named: צפר (*tspher*) a *sparrow*—קרא (*quera*) a *partridge*—תור (*tur*) a *turtle*, have, each, a resemblance to the chirping, call or voice of these birds respectively; and so of others. Are not these instances criterions of originality?

For further remarks on this subject, relative to the manner in which God himself has been graciously pleased to assist the first Pair in the *establishment* of language, see a long and learned Note in a book entitled “*Conjectural Observations on the Origin and Progress of Alphabetic Writing*,” p. 56, &c.

tion of a very few of them, to express words infinite in number, seems to be
 “ such knowledge as was too wonderful
 “ and excellent for man! he could not
 “ attain unto it.”

From the mutability of language let us now pass to the *errors of translations*, and try, whether this objection to the credibility of the Holy Scriptures be better founded than the former.

Soon after the canon of the Old Testament was settled by Ezra, Nehemiah and others of the great synagogue, which happened about 400 years before Christ, the *Samaritan* version of the Pentateuch was made, in the manner already mentioned, and, about 120 years after, or 280 before Christ, the Greek version, called the *Septuagint*, was also made: Then followed the *Syriac*, supposed to have been written about the end of the first century—The old *Italic* next, for the use of the Latins,
 soon

soon after their conversion to Christianity—and that celebrated edition of it, corrected and published by St. Jerome in the latter part of the fourth century, and known under the name of the *Vulgate*—not to mention the Arabic, and all the versions of a later date*.

The different means, by which it has thus pleased the Almighty, to protect from time to time his Revelations to man, are strengthened by others of a collateral nature—1st, by parallel passages in the Hebrew text itself—2dly, by the Chaldee paraphrases—3dly, the quotations in the New Testament—4thly, those made by Philo, Josephus, and other Jews, or by the Greek and Latin Fathers, down to the tenth century, at which time, true Theo-

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logy,

* The reader, who wishes for particular information on these latter versions, may consult the 2d volume of Marsh's Translation of Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament, and Bishop (now Primate) Newcome's Historical View of the English Biblical Translations.

logy, that had long been buried in the barbarism and superstition of the preceding ages, began to revive, and turned men's attention from Tradition to Scripture—from the Talmud to the Bible*: Thus did the ancient versions of the Holy Scriptures, and their collateral securities, obviate in a great degree the injuries of time, and render autographical existence less necessary to their authenticity, than to *that* of any other writings in the world; for the authenticity of a book depends not on the preservation of its original Manuscript—especially, if during the life of the author, it has been made known and published: This was the case with respect to the books of the New Testament as well as the Old; during the lives of the Apostles their writings were circulated, copies of them were afterwards multiplied, and

* Buxtorf de abbrev. Heb. p. 294.

and collected into a single volume, and, lastly, various readings examined and compared.

Obvious are the advantages derived from these various sources of information, in rectifying errors, and restoring the true sense of the original—advantages, that no other writings of antiquity can boast of: We do not, however, pretend that our translations of the holy Scriptures are free from errors and defects, but we deny, that these are of such consequence as to injure either Faith or Practice—Doctrine or Duty. They argue, indeed, the frailty of man—not any want of wisdom or goodness in God, who has given us sufficient means of knowing his will, in the ordinary way of communication from one person to another: Ignorance or presumption may indeed think otherwise, and expect that God should perpetually work miracles for our information: Such seems
to

to be Mr. Paine's reasoning on this subject, who, for an error in translating, or a corruption in copying, would reject the whole: On this principle, the best performances of antiquity would fail, whenever a faulty edition or translation of them came forth into the world—they would sink in “the possibility of suppressing such a word, or the probability of altering it;” such *possibilities*, and *probabilities*, are, surely, no reason for supposing a fabrication of the whole: This would be an extraordinary mode of reasoning indeed—it would be, as Dr. Johnson has expressed it, to “reason possibilities into probabilities, and probabilities into certainties.”

From the objections which Mr. Paine has thus idly stated to human language, as the vehicle of the word of God, he proceeds to infer, that this word cannot exist in speech or in print, but in the
creation

creation we behold ; “ This,” says he, “ is
 “ the real and ever-existing word of God,
 “ in which we cannot be deceived ; it
 “ proclaimeth his power—it demonstrates
 “ his wisdom—it manifests his goodness
 “ and beneficence.”

Great and glorious, surely, is the creation we behold ! and clearly to an enlightened mind does it manifest these attributes of God ! But, without a more distinct and authoritative Interpreter, the visible creation does not manifest them—it did not manifest them to the Pagans of the ancient, nor does it to the Pagans of the modern world : Of this, the multiplicity of their Gods, and the different principles and passions ascribed to them, are a sufficient proof : When Mr. Paine, therefore, asserts, that language “ is incapable
 “ of being used as the means of un-
 “ changeable and uniform information,” it may be asked, Is creation the means of
 such

such information? If it be, whence the diversity of opinions in the Pagan world, with respect to the Divine nature and attributes*; and, whence those absurd rites and ceremonies, which enlightened reason reprobates and condemns? Whence the declared doubts and difficulties of the most celebrated philosopher of all antiquity, with respect to *Prayer* in particular? and, whence the necessity he acknowledged for some *Divine Instructor* on this head? such an instructor it has pleased the Almighty to send down to us—to give us just ideas of that *providential* care and goodness which the creation alone could never give, and of the conduct, which,

* It is well known, that the sages of antiquity were divided in their sentiments in this respect, some denying the *omniscience*, others the *prescience*, and others the *providence* of the Divine Being:—even one of their philosophic sects imagined him *corporeal* and subject to all the vices and corruptions of human nature, while others held that the gods were all subject to a blind and irresistible *fate*.—See Cicero's *Academic Questions*—and *de naturâ Deorum*.

which, on our part, is most acceptable to him.

Mr. Paine professes to believe, *that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow-creatures happy*; and I shall not question the sincerity either of his belief or practice in these respects; but I ask, whence did he derive them? whence his knowledge of the nature and obligations of these, and other moral and religious duties? the Creation does not *intuitively* impress them on the mind; else, why is not their evidence uniform and universal? were it so, it would be contrary to experience and analogy in all other instances: A knowledge of Natural Philosophy, of Natural History, or of any other useful science, cannot be attained without attentive care, and, seldom, without laborious study: As well might Mr. Paine say, he could circumnavigate the Earth without the aid

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of

of a compass, as that he could acquire just notions of God, and the duties of religion, without the aid of Revelation direct or derivative : If he has not read the Scriptures, he has read books into which their spirit has been transfused—he has read them *partially* at least, of which his remarks and references, however ill-founded *, are a sufficient proof : To this cause, or in other words, to the education he has received in a Christian country, does he owe whatever is true in his reasoning on the word of God ; what is false he owes to his own ignorance and presumption : Hence the following rant, in which he has thought proper to indulge himself ;
 “ It is only in *Creation* that all our ideas
 “ and conceptions of a *word of God* can
 “ unite ;

* He refers, for instance, to the 19th Psalm, as a true Deistical composition, which takes *the book of Creation as the word of God, without referring to any other book* : It is only necessary to read the 7th and 8th verses of this psalm, for a refutation.

“ unite ; the Creation speaketh an uni-
 “ versal language, independently on hu-
 “ man speech or human language, multi-
 “ plied and various as they be ; it is an
 “ ever-existing original, which every man
 “ can read ; it cannot be forged—it can-
 “ not be counterfeited—it cannot be lost
 “ —it cannot be altered—it cannot be
 “ suppressed ; it does not depend on the
 “ will of man, whether it shall be pub-
 “ lished or not ; it publishes itself from
 “ one end of the earth to the other ; it
 “ preaches to all nations and to all worlds ;
 “ and this word of God reveals to man
 “ all that is necessary for man to know
 “ of God *.”

That the *word of God* does reveal *this*
 we admit, but it is the word of God, as
 contained—not in the Creation *we behold*,
 but in the Holy Scriptures which *we read* :

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* Age of Reason, p. 23, 24.

It is here we are informed, that it is “ the
 “ Lord of all power who made the earth
 “ and created man upon it—who stretch-
 “ ed out the Heavens and commanded all
 “ their hosts—who measured the waters
 “ in the hollow of his hands, and meted
 “ out the Heavens with a span—who
 “ weighed the mountains in scales and
 “ the hills in a balance:— Before the
 “ mountains were brought forth, or ever
 “ thou hadst formed the earth and the
 “ world—even from everlasting to ever-
 “ lasting thou art God !”

Such is the language—the plain, intel-
 ligible, though sublime language of the
 Bible—a language which every one may
 read, who *can* read—which has not *been*
forged—which has not been *counterfeited*
 —which has not, with respect to any
 thing of importance, been *altered—lost*, nor
suppressed—which *publishes* to all nations
 —not only the *wisdom* and *omnipotence*,
 but

but also the *goodness* of that Divine Being, upon whom *the eyes of all wait*, and who gives *them their meat in due season*—who openeth *his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness*.

The inference from this is obvious, that we “love one another,” for “God is “love,” who “maketh his sun to rise on “the evil and on the good, and sendeth “rain on the just and the unjust;”—yet, who *will reward every man according to his works*: Hence the true Christian’s confidence and consolation—his fortitude in danger, and his resignation in calamity: He takes the *truth* of the Lord for his *shield* and *buckler*, therefore, he is not “afraid for the terror by night, nor for “the arrow that flieth by day—for the “pestilence that walketh in darkness—“nor the destruction that wasteth at “noon day*.”—Does the *Creation* we be-
bold

* Psalm xci. of the Bible-version.

bold speak a language like this? does it *reveal to man*, under such circumstances, *all that is necessary for man to know*?—If not, let the unbeliever tremble; or, at least, let him learn to respect the Holy Scriptures, from which such advantages are derived; for, whatever he may assert, or insinuate to the contrary, “ verily there “ is a *reward* for the righteous—doubt- “ less there is a God that *judgeth* the “ earth.”

But it is not my design to pursue the arguments of Mr. Paine beyond the limits which I have prescribed to myself in this Essay: Whether Human Language, the gift of God; or the Creation at large, the work of his hands, be the proper *vehicle of his word*? was a question which I thought merited particular consideration, from the artful manner in which the adversary has stated it, and the dangerous consequences he has thence deduced
against

against the existence of all Scriptural Revelation : If it be said, that I have dwelt longer in the discussion than the nature of the question seems to require, I answer in the words of a periodical writer on a similar occasion, that “ my excuse must
“ be sought in the importance of the sub-
“ ject, and the celebrity of the man *.”

* See Monthly Review for Sept. 1794, p. 82.

VOCABULARY.

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VOGEL'S ARMY

H E B R E W
V O C A B U L A R Y,

Referred to in Part I. Page 46.

אָגַר *agar*, to gather: Hence the Greek *αγαγω*, Latin *agger* *.

אֹהֶל *obel*, a Tent or Tabernacle—Gr. *αυλη*—Latin *aula*—Eng. *hall*.

אוֹר *ur*, Light: Greek *φως* *mane*—Lat. *uro*.

אֲרָב *arab*, to lie in wait, rob or spoil: Hence *Arabes* or *Arabs*, the people so called: These are the descendants of Ishmael, of whom it was prophesied, that his hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him.

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* For the *justness* of *this*, and the following derivations, I have principally consulted *Parkhurst's Hebrew and English Lexicon*, *Plantavir's Thesaurus Synonymicus*, and *Leigh's Critica Sacra*: Many other derivatives might be also adduced from the same authors—particularly *Parkhurst*, to whom I refer the reader, whose curiosity may lead him to a more minute inquiry on this subject.

בוא *bo*, to come or go: Gr. *βαινω* and *βαινω*.

בלבל *babel* or בלבל *balbel*, to speak confusedly: Lat. *balbus*—Eng. *babble*—French *babiller*.

גב *gab*, a bunch on the back—an eminence—Lat. *gibbus*: Hence Eng. *gibbous*.

גבר *gabar*, to be powerful: Gr. *κυβερναν*—Lat. *gubernare*—Eng. *govern*.

גלם *galam*, to roll together: Lat. *glomero*—*glomus*.

גמל *gamal*, a camel: This name has passed, not only into all the Eastern, but into the Western languages: Thus in Arabic, it is *gemal*—Chaldee, *gamal*—Gr. *καμηλος*—Lat. *camelus*.

דור *dur*, to live or pass one's life in a place: Lat. *duro*—Eng. *endure*.

דקר *dakar*, to stab,—Eng. *dagger*, and (by a transposition of the letters) the Scotch *dirk*.

הודה *hoda*, from ידה *yada*, to celebrate: Gr. *ὕμνος*—Lat. *oda*—Eng. *ode*.

הילל *helel*, from ילל *yalal*, to cry out: Lat. *ejulo*—Eng. *howl*.

הללויה *halleluiab*, from הלל *hillel* and יה *jab*, to praise God: Hence the ancient Greek acclamation, *ἑὸς θεοῦ* in honour of Apollo, i. e. the light.

הן *hen*, and הנה *hinne*, to behold—Greek *ὄψομαι*—Lat. *en*!

חרץ *charash* or חרת *charat*, to engrave: Gr. *χαράσσω*—Lat. *charta*—Eng. *character*.

טבר *tabar*, the navel, a high place—Lat. *tuber*—hence
Eng. *tubercle*.

טמא *tamee*, to be polluted: Lat. *tamino*—Eng. *contaminate*.

יין *yajin*, the liquor called in Gr. *δίνος*—Lat. *vinum*—
Eng. *wine*—Fr. *vin*.

ידע *yada*, to perceive: Gr. *ἰδέομαι*—Lat. *video*—Eng.
idea.

ירא *yara*, to fear, to reverence: Gr. *ἱερός*.

יתר *yatar*, to leave a residue, to be redundant: Lat.
itero-iterum.

כזה *kava*, to burn—Gr. *καίω, καυσω*—Eng. *caustic*.

כלמה *celima*: Lat. *calumnia*—Eng. *calumny*.

כסה *casa*, to cover: Lat. *casa*, a cottage—Eng. *case*.

כתנת *cethoneth*, a garment: Gr. *χiton*—Lat. *tunica*.

לחד *lachak*, to lap, or take in with the tongue—Gr.
λαχέω—Eng. *lick*.

לאט *laat*, to hide or cover: Gr. *λανθάνω*—Lat. *lateo*—
Eng. *lot*.

לאך *laak*, a messenger: Lat. *legatus*—Eng. *legate*.

לעג *laag*, to mock—Eng. *laugh*.

מום *mum*, a blemish: Gr. *μωμος*: Lat. *Momus*.

מחה *macha*, to destroy: Gr. *μαχόμεαι-μαχην*.

מנה *mana*, to compute or reckon: Gr. *μνησθαι*—Eng.
moon (by whose phases time is reckoned)—and
hence *almanack*—perhaps too, the Lat. *moneta*—
Eng. *money*—and *many*.

- מסך** *masac*, to mix—Gr. *μίσγω*—Lat. *misceo*.
- משורה** *mesura*, from שור *sur*, to act as a prince—Lat. *mensura* (quali rerum dividendarum Domina & Princeps, says Buxtorf)—hence the English *measure*.
- נאם** *naam*, to say or affirm: Gr. *ονομα*—Lat. *nomen*—Eng. *name*.
- נוה** *navva*, to inhabit, an habitation—Gr. *ναῖω*.
- עול** *Ivel*, to act deceitfully—Eng. *evil*.
- עדן** *Haden*, pleasure: Gr. *εδνη*—Eng. *Eden*.
- עולם** *olam*, an age, from עלם to be concealed: Lat. *olim*.
- עמם** *amas*, to load: Fr. *amasser*—Eng. *amass*.
- עת** *et*, time: Gr. *ετος*—Lat. *etas*.
- פה** *phe*, a mouth: Gr. *φημι*—Lat. *fama*—Eng. *fame*.
- פג** *phag*, green figs: Lat. *ficus*—Fr. *figue*.
- פגר** *pigger*, to be faint: Lat. *piger*.
- פלג** *palag*, to divide: Gr. *πιδαινος*—Lat. *pelagus*.
- פלגש** *pillegesh*, a concubine: Gr. *παλλακις*—Lat. *Pellex*.
- פסח** *pesach*, passing over: Gr. *παχα*—Lat. *Pascha*.
- פרה** *phere*, a wild ass, or wild man: Lat. *fera*—and perhaps the Eng. *free*. See Parkh.
- פרדס** *pardes*, (from פרה *para*, to bear fruit) a fruit-garden or orchard: Gr. *παράδεισος*—Eng. *paradise*.
- פד** *tnad*, the same as in Eng. *fide*.
- קנה** *kanne*, a reed: Lat. *canna*—Eng. *cane*.

- קרן *keren*, a horn, power, rays of light : Gr. *κράυης*
κράων—Lat. *cornu*—*corona*—Eng. *crown*.
- קול *kol*, a voice : Gr. *καλω*—Eng. *call*.
- קרא *kara*, to call : Gr. *κραζω*.
- ראה *raa*, to see : Gr. *ὁραω*.
- רב *rab*, many : Lat. *rabula*—Eng. *rabble*—and *Rabbi*,
 from much learning, or one who instructs or ex-
 cels many in learning.
- שבת *sbabbath*, rest : Gr. *σαββατον*—Eng. *sabbath*.
- שכן *sbakan*, to dwell, as in a tent or tabernacle : Gr.
σκηνη—Lat. *scena*—Eng. *scene*.
- שלה *sbala*, to be at leisure : Gr. *σχολη*—Lat. *schola*—
 Eng. *school*.
- שליט *sballit*, and שלטון *sbilton*, a chief governour, from
 שלט *shalat*, to exert absolute authority : Hence
 the Arabic title *Sultan*.
- שקל *sbakal*, to weigh : Eng. *scale*.
- שור *sur*, to reign as a prince : Eng. *fire*—*fir*—Fr.
fleur.
- שק *sak*, a bag : Gr. *σακος*—Lat. *faccus*—Eng. *sack* :
 Plantavit mentions all the Western languages into
 which this is introduced.
- תמה *tema*, to be amazed : Gr. *θαυμα*—Lat. *timeo*—
 Eng. *timid*.
- תור *tur*, to search or range about, a wild pigeon : Lat.
turtur—Eng. *turtle-dove*—Fr. *tour*.



E R R A T A.

- Page 9, note, line 2, *for* ocular, *read* ocular.
14, note, *for* Affles', *read* Affle's.
32, l. 17, and p. 33, l. 6, *for* Pentacost, *r.* Pentecost.
37, l. 4, *after* שֶׁט, *add* Seth.
55, l. 15, *for* tranquility, *r.* tranquillity.
70, l. 14, *for* genetive, *r.* genitive.
141, l. 11, *for* Horæ Hebricæ, *r.* Horæ Hebraicæ.
169, l. 4, *for* have, *r.* had.
200, l. 11 and 12, *for* Instructor, *r.* Instrufter.

